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THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



THE  
THEORY AND PRACTICE OF  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

*With Special Reference to India  
and the East*

BY  
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AUTHOR OF *Suggestions for the Teaching of English in India* ;  
*The Methods of the Master*, etc.

WITH A FOREWORD BY  
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*To*  
**MY WIFE**



## FOREWORD

THE teaching of religion to children and young people is one of the greatest concerns of the Christian Church. With the rapid advance in the knowledge of the principles governing education in secular subjects has come the belated realization that even religion is not exempt from the laws that govern the mind of the pupil. The wise teacher is no longer content to regard religious education as a mere matter of pouring information into inattentive and sometimes unwilling ears, or to consider that the memorization of the Catechism and selected portions of the Bible is enough to secure right conduct. We know now that the training of the emotional life, and the formation of right habits are an integral part of religious teaching no less important than the Scripture lesson. Because of this, the daily period of worship in the school and the activities of the playground, the scout troop, and the hostel assume a place of new importance.

The successful teacher must know the minds of his pupils as well as the subject-matter of his course. The 'Child-Centred School' places its strongest emphasis not upon the teaching of such subjects as hygiene or history, but upon the teaching of *the child*. This means that the teacher must be a practical psychologist—a specialist in children. If this expert knowledge is considered necessary for the teaching of

the ordinary subjects of the school curriculum, how much greater is its importance in the case of the person who undertakes to direct the unfolding spiritual experience of the pupil, where attitudes and habits count far more than any amount of accurate but cold information.

Books dealing with the psychology and method of religious education are more than abundant in Western countries. Up to the present there has been all too little effort to provide for India books of this sort, written by those who have had practical experience in the educational problems of Indian children and youth. Mr. Ryburn brings to his task the double qualification of excellent training along the lines of the psychology of religion, coupled with years of practical experience in applying this knowledge to the needs of boys, both Christian and non-Christian, in an Indian high school. His excellent book shows the connexion between the developing instincts and emotions of the schoolboy, and the teacher's opportunity for using these mental states in the development of the Christian life.

Not infrequently one meets earnest Christians who fear lest this psychological approach to religion should place too much dependence upon textbook and method and psychological law, and too little upon the working of that Spirit that 'bloweth where it listeth'. This is undoubtedly a danger to be guarded against, but no more in religious education than in theology or the work of healing. We who believe that Christ is the 'Lord of All Good Life' believe that He is the 'Lord of Truth' as well; and that His Spirit works with, and not against, the laws that govern mind and

body, natural and supernatural working together in the creation and growth of Christian experience in the child. Readers of this book will find this double emphasis throughout its pages.

As one whose special interest for some years has been the improvement of the type of religious teaching given in the Christian schools of India, it gives me much pleasure to commend this book to Christian teachers and pastors and parents, welcoming it as a much needed guide for all those engaged in the great vocation of the teacher. I hope that it may be widely used in training and theological colleges and also for individual reading and study.

*Nagpur*

ALICE B. VAN DOREN

*December 1933*



## PREFACE

Of the importance of the psychological approach to education, little doubt will be expressed in these days. The same confidence, however, is not always felt in regard to religious education. Experience is showing, gradually, that in this field also, a knowledge of psychological processes and facts is of the greatest importance and can be of the greatest help. This is especially true with regard to the practical application of the principles of psychology. It is this practical application which so often baffles us whether we are parents, teachers, or pastors. It is in the hope that the suggestions contained in it may be of some help to those who are engaged in guiding children to a knowledge and experience of their Heavenly Father, that this book has been written. All of us who are parents are forced, whether we like it or not, to deal practically in some sort of way with the problems which we are continually meeting. Hence a knowledge of our psychological make-up and of the psychological make-up of our children should be invaluable to us. The same is true for teachers and pastors.

I have also attempted to show the fallacy of the distinction so often drawn between sacred and secular. One has to speak of 'religious education', but in reality all education is religious, or ought to be. It is certainly

true that everything we learn, think and do has an effect on our relationship with our Heavely Father. The more this is realized, and the greater the practical effect it has on our method and dealings with our children, the better chance will there be of our being able to lead them into the life abundant.

I wish to express my thanks to the editor of the *Guardian* for permission to use articles of mine which have appeared in the *Guardian* and also to the editor of the *United Church Review* for permission to use material from some of my articles in that magazine. I am indebted to the Rev. E. L. King for a considerable amount of the material in Chapter VIII. I wish to express my thanks to Miss Van Doren for reading the MS. and for suggestions, and to Mr. R. M. Chet-singh for suggestions.

It will be noticed that I have used the masculine all through. This is not from want of consideration for girls and lady teachers, but purely for the sake of simplicity.

*Kharar*

*September 1934*

W. M. RYBURN

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## INTRODUCTION

SAVING a man's soul is not a business which is necessarily to be done wholly or even chiefly on Sunday. We cannot save a soul without saving a body and a mind. In fact, to speak of a 'soul' is to divide up personality in a way which has no correspondence with actual fact. We do not live in separate compartments. We live as a unified whole, and anything which affects one particular part or aspect of our being will affect the whole of it.

We are sometimes told that the Church is concerned only with a man's or a woman's religion; that it is concerned only with saving souls. The difficulty is to find where religion begins and ends; to find what particular part of the personality the soul is. If the Church is concerned with religion (we can put in the word 'only' if we like) then, *ipso facto*, it is concerned with the whole of life, and there can be no part of life and no aspect of living to which it can be inattentive. If the Church is concerned with saving souls, then it must be concerned with everything which goes to the making up of a man's or a woman's personality.

It is just because this fact has been lost sight of in the West, that our western civilization has reached such a parlous condition. There was a day when the Church claimed supremacy over every part of

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a man's life. And although one does not agree with the ways in which that supremacy was exercised, yet the dispensing with the authority of the Church, or perhaps, we should say, the authority of religion, from large spheres of human life, educational, economic, social, recreational, has been all to the bad. I do not mean to say that Church courts should have authority in these matters as they did in days gone by. But the Church, through its members and activities, should show very definitely what the practical application of its beliefs to such matters means, and, through its organization and members, should give a practical example of how these applications can be carried out under modern conditions. There should be no beating about the bush, when it is a matter of the principles of Jesus *or* modern ways of living. In other words the Church should aim at building a Christian society. Its aim should be that of the Kingdom of God Movement in Japan.

Now a Christian society does not mean simply a number of individuals, holding certain beliefs about God and Christ, who come together once a week. It is a society where every activity of its members is governed by, and founded on, the principles laid down by Jesus Christ. It will follow that the society in its corporate aspects will also act according to those principles. The ultimate aim of the Church must be the establishment of such a society on earth. Jesus called it the Kingdom of God, and His object was the bringing of that kingdom on earth. His followers were to be the salt of the earth who would permeate the whole world; the leaven which would change the nature of the whole world; the light which would

illumine the hearts of the whole world. If this be our aim as a Church and as individual members of the Church, what are the implications for us in connexion with education?

I suppose that from the point of view of the establishment of the Kingdom of God no one is in a better strategic position, and no one has a greater influence, than the Christian teacher. Teachers have it in their power to make or mar the rising generation; to present to their charges an ideal of humble service or a grasping selfishness; to lift their pupils upwards and onwards or to leave them as they found them; to inspire them or to deaden all aspiration in their souls. One reason why the Church in the West has lost so much of its power is that it has lost control of the most important strategic position, namely, the school.

Now by saying that the Church has lost control of the school, I do not mean to imply that all schools should be what are called 'Church Schools'. That would be impossible and not at all desirable. But the Church should be able to make its influence felt in schools through the key person in the school, that is, the teacher. To my mind it is just as important for the bringing in of the Kingdom of God on earth that the Church should run training colleges as that the Church should run seminaries and theological colleges. No one imagines that the Government is competent to run seminaries, even if it would. Why it should be considered competent to run training colleges, the spiritual life of whose students is every bit as important for the community as that of students of seminaries, is a mystery.

Now, as the Lindsay Commission has noted, this is a very pressing problem with the Church here in India. There is a grave danger that the Church in India is losing control of a strategic position just as has been done in the West. If we would not be willing to allow our Christian pastors to be trained in a Government seminary, supposing such a startling institution were a possibility, why are we so complacently allowing our secondary school Christian teachers to be trained in Government training colleges, which are admittedly neutral institutions with all the religious deadness which neutrality means? And yet, from the point of view of the welfare of the Church, and its growth in quality and spirituality, the Christian teacher is *just as* important a factor as his comrade, the pastor.

Does the teacher not need all the help he can get from those who look on his profession as a definite answer by man to the call of God? Does the teacher not need the inspiration of a definitely Christianized training? All teachers who during the course of their training, have come in contact with men of deep Christian convictions can testify to the immense difference that such men have made to them, and to their attitude to their life-work. Those of us who have been through what, for want of a better name, we may call 'Church' training colleges, realize how much we gained that would never have been ours in the ordinary college.

The matter is a vital one for the Kingdom of God in this land. As a Church we are not yet making the mistake of entrusting the education of our Christian children to non-Christians. But, on the men's side

at any rate, we are in danger of not paying proper attention to the training of those Christian teachers, in whose hands are, to such a large extent, the destinies of the Church of Jesus Christ in India. Let us be warned by the mistakes of the West, and see that this important matter is no longer allowed to remain in the background, unconsidered and neglected.

Connected with this is the question of how the Church is dealing with the matter of religious education. Surely we have here another strategic position in the campaign to bring in the Kingdom of God. We are very careful to learn the most up-to-date methods for imparting knowledge of so-called secular subjects, and of organizing our schools. Are we as careful to be as up-to-date and as efficient in the imparting of religious knowledge and in the training of our children in the matter of religion? Do we not think, or act as if we thought, that religion can be taught by anyone as long as he is a Christian and has more or less a desire to teach the subject? Do our Church councils make a point of paying attention to the religious education of the Christian children under their control? Are our pastors able to advise and train in this work those who, in their congregations, are dealing with the young people? One cannot expect a pastor to know everything, but surely this is one thing that he should know. If he cannot train, or supervise the training of the young people in his congregation, inevitably his work will be enormously handicapped. One would venture to say that the subject of religious education is a good deal more important than some of the subjects which our pastors take during the

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course of their training, and should be given much more prominence than is usually the case.

Here, however, the teacher ought to be able to come to the pastor's help. Thanks to Moga and similar institutions, a body of vernacular Christian teachers is gradually being produced, which is doing an increasing amount of good work along this line. But the authorities of such institutions would be the first to admit that the time available for this most important of subjects is lamentably short. But what of the very considerable number of secondary school Christian teachers, all engaged in what is known as 'teaching Scripture', the very great majority of whom have had no training in this narrow subject, much less in the wider one of religious education? These teachers, devoted and anxious to do their best, are not being given a chance, and their pupils are not being given a chance, simply because they have not been trained. We hesitate to employ an untrained teacher in our schools. Does the fact that a Christian teacher is untrained in what is, after all, the most important part of his work, make us hesitate?

This is naturally a source of great weakness in the Church. If pastors are not trained in dealing with their young charges, if the Christian teachers to whom they naturally turn for help are not trained, what will be the future of the Church? It will get along, perhaps we think, muddle along as it has done in the past. Perhaps it may muddle along, but muddling along is not good enough for the agency which is to bring in the Kingdom of God on earth. If we have any real desire for the Church to be a live force in the Kingdom of God Movement, we

cannot be content for it to muddle along. No one worthy of the name of Christ can be content with what has been in the past. We must look for, and have the faith to believe in, better things. But faith without works is a snare and a delusion, and in this case 'works' means a very definite campaign to capture the young people of the Church, to capture their imagination, to capture their ideals, to capture their ambitions, to capture their souls and release all the power and energy of youth in the great movement. This book has been written in the hope of giving some indication of how this may be done. That it can be done by muddling along in the old way, is quite unbelievable. To hope that the Church will become strong, while we neglect to train reinforcements, is sheer folly. The strength of the Church may be gauged by the strength of the youth movement in it. How does our Church measure up to this test?

This matter of religious education is but another argument for the Church concerning itself with the training of Christian teachers. It is only when the Church has control of their training that such a subject can be dealt with adequately. Not that it should not form an important part of the curriculum of a seminary also. But it would be the natural crowning arch of the edifice or the curriculum of a Christian training college.

The whole secret of the success of any movement for bringing in the Kingdom of God lies with the youth of the Church. We read of the child-centred school. *We need a child-centred and youth-centred Church.* Only by inspiring the youth of the Church

and filling them with the enthusiasm and vision of Jesus Christ shall we be able to do what we ought to be doing towards bringing in the Kingdom. We cannot inspire the youth of the Church unless we are trained for the work, and, in neglecting this matter of religious education, the Church is simply asking for failure and depression.

It should not be impossible for each congregation to have its religious education enthusiast or enthusiasts; men and women who would definitely take up the subject, study it to the best of their ability, and labour to make themselves acquainted with the latest thought and experiment in connexion with the subject. Working with the pastor, such enthusiasts would be able to do a tremendous amount for the young people of the congregation, especially if they took advantage of such movements as the Christian Endeavour. Such an enthusiast would have to be prepared to give up very considerable periods of his or her leisure for the 'hobby', but the importance of the work and the knowledge that it was the most worthwhile service that could be offered, would more than compensate for any sacrifice of time and energy.

Then, would it not be possible for religious education to have a much more prominent place in the deliberations of Church councils and other Church bodies than is given to it at present, as a rule? If in each congregation there were an expert religious education enthusiast, then such persons could form a committee of, or under, the Church council, to direct and inspire the youth-work in the whole area under the Church council concerned. The work of such a committee would probably be more inspirational and

advisory than directory, but it could be a tremendous force directed towards making Churches youth-centred as they ought to be, and this is the first step necessary if we are to take part in any Kingdom of God movement in India.

That the significance of the movement started in Japan, few of us will be disposed to question. The success and permanence of any such movement depends on the hold that it takes on the youth of the Church. We cannot guide it or them unless we understand our children and know their natures and natural ways of acting. It is in the hope of helping in some way towards this understanding that the following pages have been written. If we neglect our young people, or if we are half-hearted and uninterested in our youth work, we shall be cutting the ground from under the whole of our Christian work. If we are to welcome any such movement as the Kingdom of God Movement we must prepare. The best preparation is a concentration on the future hope of the Church.

## CHAPTER I

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF

MAN might be defined as the self-organizing animal. His development consists in the perfecting and organizing of the drivings or urges which are an essential part of his nature. We all have an urge to activity which causes us to act in response to the stimuli of various situations. This urge may show itself in various ways, from the simple response of eating, which is the result of the simple situation of an empty stomach, to the response, of, say, producing a play, which may result from a complicated stimulus. This urge or desire for activity seems to be part of our hereditary outfit. It is our nature to be active, to strive, to accomplish and to create.

This general urge shows itself through various channels. We are not simply endowed with a vague general tendency to action and to striving, but there are certain well-defined paths along which this power acts. Certain situations tend to call up certain responses. If the situations contain more or less the same elements, the nature of the response will be more or less the same. These responses are preceded and accompanied by feeling. Thus, when a small child hears a sudden loud noise, it experiences a feeling of fear, and it cries, or if able to do so, runs away. It

will react in this way to any kind of loud noise. If it sees something that is new to its experience, it is filled with a feeling of wonder and examines the new object. It will usually react in more or less the same way whenever it comes across objects that seem unusual to it. The same feeling will cause it to act in more or less the same way in each similar situation.

These paths along which our general hereditary urge acts, the feeling that accompanies the urge, and the resultant action, are termed instinctive tendencies, or, shortly, instincts. In an instinctive tendency there is cognition or knowledge, emotion or feeling, and conation or action. It is the emotion which determines the direction and nature of the resulting action. The driving force is given its power and its direction by the feeling aroused by the situation which presents itself.

I am not a hunter, and I have no gun. I meet a tiger. A certain situation has arisen. I understand that the situation is a dangerous one, because I know something of the unpleasant habits of tigers, and I also know that I am defenceless. A feeling of fear fills me. As a result I run for my life, or climb a tree, if the tiger gives me the chance. The feeling, fear, has given my natural tendency to do something in response to the situation an intensity and a definite direction.

But suppose I am a hunter and have a gun. I am looking for tigers when I meet one. There is here a very different situation. The feeling now dominant is one of desire fulfilled and eager expectation. Fear does not control me or my actions. The instinct

aroused this time is that of pugnacity, and, provided that I am a good shot, I shoot the tiger instead of running away. The different situation has brought a different feeling, and a different direction is given to my tendency to do something to meet the situation, with different results.

The responses that are the result of the functioning of the instinctive tendencies are not, in man, fixed. In the case of the tiger, I may run or I may climb. The instincts are, we say, modifiable and educable. A frog sees something move in front of it, and at once its tongue shoots out. If you throw small pellets of paper down just in front of it, the frog will fill itself with paper just as happily as it would fill itself with flying white ants. A child at first tries to put everything into its mouth, but we can teach it to put only certain things into its mouth, and that certain of these things have to be cooked first. The child's instinct is modifiable to a very great extent. The frog's instinct, if modifiable at all, is so to a very small extent only.

As the child grows, its reactions to stimuli develop and interact. The child is not the slave of fixed modes of action, but its behaviour is capable of endless modification, variety, and progress. Although the basis of life is the instincts, and although the foundations of character are to be found in the emotions, yet man can use these. They are his tools and his material. They need not be his masters.

There are three courses open to the individual as he grows and develops. First of all, he may let his instincts take their natural course, without any attempt at control or direction. He may live the life of a

brute, at the mercy of every whim and impulse. When he is angry, he strikes. When he wants something he takes it. In other words he grows up to be an unco-ordinated, unbalanced, aimless collection of conflicting emotions and desires.

In the second place a person may attempt to repress his instinctive feelings and actions. When he is curious, he strives to banish the doubts and questionings from his mind. He tries to keep hidden and away from the light of his conscious mind his sexual urges. He tries, in short, to live with closed taps on the pipes along which comes his natural urges and desires for action.

In the third place a person may attempt to sublimate his instincts; to use them for the high purposes for which God intended them. It is along this third line of sublimation that the development of the personality lies. It is through sublimation that the truly human personality with its beauty of balance, proportion, poise, and control, can be attained. Anger becomes righteous indignation which moves to campaigns for social reform. The parental instinct may extend its scope till it produces a Kalimpong, leper asylums and orphan homes. The sex instinct with its creative urge, produces music and art and literature. In sublimation the instinctive force is directed into higher channels than those along which it would normally operate if left to itself. The kind of urge and force is the same. Its general direction is the same. But it acts on a higher level, and the resulting actions are directed towards the attainment of objects of a higher nature.

The instincts, then, provide ways or channels along

which we react to our environment, physical and social. These two, environment and instincts, along with our physical inheritance provide the tools and material with which we mould our characters and develop our personalities. Neither environment nor instincts, of course, are passive, nor can they be used as we use bricks or wood. Both are intensely active. Over the environment, any *one* person, as he or she grows up, can have little control or power. Over the instinctive tendencies to activity in different directions a person may have, thanks to his intelligence and will, a great and increasing power of control and direction. That the lines of response according to which the instincts function are not immutably fixed is the great virtue of the instincts in man. Although, as we have seen, the same sort of urge to action in a general direction will always result from the same sort of situation, yet the scope for modification, within the limits of that 'general direction' is very great, and may range, in the case of pugnacity, for instance, from killing a money-lender to leading a campaign against child-marriage.

So while an instinct is active and determinant of action within wide limits, it can be controlled and brought into its proper place in a developed and organized personality where it has a necessary function to perform. The development of character and personality is largely a matter of the organization of instincts, and the directing and controlling of the way in which they cause us to react to the various situations in life provided by our environment. To reduce the matter to what are perhaps over simple terms, in order to make it quite clear, the

environment supplies opportunities for action, the instincts (which include the accompanying feelings) supply the urge to act, and the will, guided by the ideal, with the aid of the intelligence, supplies the particular direction of the action, and the control of the action.

What then are these instincts which we have, on which so much depends? There have been many attempts to classify instincts, into which there is no need to delve. Probably the most satisfactory is that given by Professor McDougall. He gives the following as the main instincts: The instinct of flight with the accompanying feeling of fear; the instinct of curiosity with the feeling of wonder; the instinct of pugnacity with the feeling of anger; the instinct of self-assertion with the feeling of pride or elation; the instinct of submission (self-abasement) with the feeling of humility or subjection; the parental instinct with the tender emotion; the sex-instinct with the feeling of love; the gregarious or herd instinct; and the instinct of acquisition.

Now everyone has all these instincts. Everyone does not have them in the same relative strength. In one person the self-assertive instinct may be strong, while in his wife the submissive instinct may be equally strong, or vice versa. One small boy has more than his fair share of the pugnacious instinct. In his brother the acquisitive instinct makes itself unpleasantly felt. They are all operative, however, to a greater or less extent in the life of every normal person.

The relative strengths of instincts will depend on the upbringing and environment of the individual. The Banya in the bazaar has the acquisitive instinct

very strongly developed. In his make-up the pugnacious instinct, however, is conspicuous by its weakness. The Pathan on the frontier, while he has the acquisitive instinct equally well-developed, has his pugnacious instinct also very strongly developed. The difference in the strength of the pugnacious instinct in the Banya and the Pathan is the result chiefly of the difference in training and environment.<sup>1</sup> Here we begin to see the beginning of our task as religious educators.

From the environment in which it lives, the child distinguishes objects, events, persons, institutions, ideas, and it gradually begins to order its life, or at any rate to live its life with reference to these various environmental points or centres. Different children may react in differing ways to these points. In different children these focal points will differ, but gradually some will become more prominent than others. At first the hereditary forces of the instincts will function haphazardly without relation to anything except the immediate situation. There is no attempt, conscious or unconscious, at organization. The child's environment continually brings him situations to which he responds without any care or knowledge of how one situation affects another, or of whether his reactions are consistent with one another. He is concerned only with the desires and wants of the moment.

Gradually, however, the focal points of which we have spoken, begin to emerge and the instincts tend

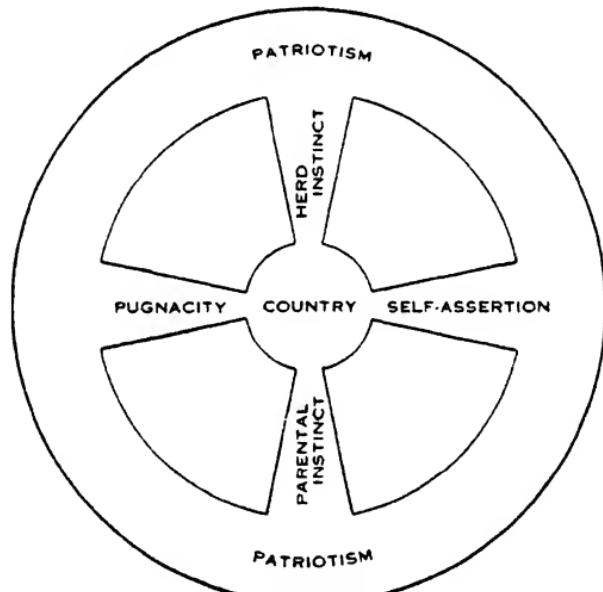
<sup>1</sup> The influence of heredity is to be remembered. From an educational point of view this influence can be affected only by a gradual change in environment.

to group themselves round these points and to be organized round these points. Such an organization round a central idea, person, institution, or object we call a sentiment. The growth of the personality takes place along the line of the organizing and directing of instincts and instinctive feelings into sentiments. This begins quite early in life, and goes on until adulthood is reached.

Very early a small child begins to form a sentiment for his mother. Round his mother as the centre of the sentiment are organized the instincts of aversion and the feeling of fear, which is shown if any danger obviously threatens the mother. Into the sentiment is also brought the instinct of pugnacity, as when the small child is ready to attack anyone hurting his mother. And so with other instincts. As the child grows, more and more of his life becomes organized into sentiments. There is a sentiment of which the centre is his school. More commonly found in India is the sentiment of which an individual teacher is the centre. The sentiment of love of family is usually a very strong one in India. There is also, coming somewhat later, the sentiment of patriotism. These sentiments may be expressed diagrammatically (see overleaf).

The organization of the life of the child into sentiments is naturally a process which extends over a long time. It will be seen, too, how important it is that the focal or central points—the co-ordinating centres—of the sentiments should be worthy ones. This is a very important task for us as religious educators whether parents, teachers or pastors. We have to do our best to see to it that the objects

which form the centres of the gradually developing sentiments of our children are worthy ones. For it is possible to have bad as well as good sentiments. If the central objects are unworthy, such as money or pleasure, then the direction given to the instincts as they work will be a bad one, and all the emotional urge and power of the instinctive forces will be towards what is bad. The conscious acceptance of



*Diagram 1*

#### THE SENTIMENT OF PATRIOTISM.

The centre of the sentiment is the country, round which are organized the instincts of pugnacity, self-assertion and the parental and herd instincts. Linked by the centre the instincts act each along their own line to unite in the sentiment of patriotism.

good focal centres, however, will ensure that the instinctive forces are directed towards what is good.

We should note also that the sentiments can be of two sorts—positive and negative. That is, we can have a 'love' sentiment or a 'hate' sentiment. The instinct of patriotism may be organized round a hatred of other countries. The sentiment for revolution may be organized round a love for an ideal state, or round hatred for a present government. The sentiment for truth may be organized from the point of view of a love of truth, or from the point of view of

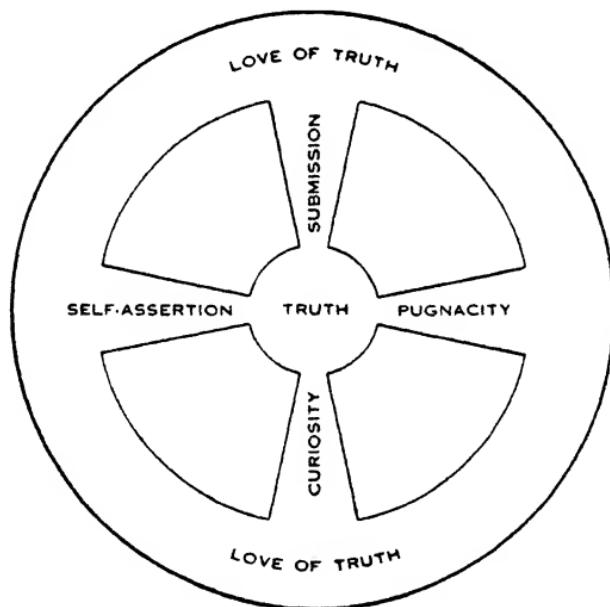


Diagram 2  
THE SENTIMENT OF LOVE OF TRUTH

In this case the centre is truth, and the organized instincts are those of pugnacity, curiosity, submission, and self-assertion.

a hatred of falsehood. It is always very desirable that the sentiments formed should be positive ones, that

they should be organizations of instincts having a fruitful, positive love at their centre, rather than an arid and negative hate. From the point of view of the development of the full personality it is the positive sentiment that is full of promise. The hate will usually lead to a restricted and perverted life.

As the personality develops and sentiments, good and bad, are formed, the stronger of the sentiments tend to become permanent features of the life of the individual. They become what we call dispositions or habits of the self. The organization of certain instincts round some particular central point has become so firmly established that responses to situations connected with the object of the sentiment come without the person concerned having to wait to think or decide. In India the sentiment of hospitality is an outstanding example of this. There is no waiting to think whether hospitality is to be offered or not. The response to the need for hospitality is automatic, and action takes place on a spontaneous decision. People are almost unconsciously hospitable.

In the same way a lawyer may develop a sentiment of distrust of statements, until he automatically distrusts everyone and everything. His reaction to a situation or to a person or to a document is unconsciously one of suspicion and distrust. Such sentiments developed into habits are sometimes called dispositions. Just as habits are useful on the physical plane in saving energy, so on the psychological plane they are also useful in the stabilization of character.

We have seen how instincts are organized into sentiments, and how sentiments sometimes become dispositions. The question now arises, as to what

happens if there is a conflict between sentiments. Is there any power or force which regulates and organizes the sentiments and brings harmony to the personality?

Now it is certainly possible for sentiments to conflict. A sentiment for truth may conflict with a sentiment for pleasure. A sentiment for one's family may conflict with a sentiment for one's country. A sentiment for one's country may conflict with a sentiment for internationalism. What happens then when such a conflict arises? The answer is that that sentiment will prevail which is most in accord with the ideal which rules the whole of life, or as we may call it, the organized self.

This organized self is made up of the different sentiments and dispositions of which we are conscious and which we have consciously accepted. In the normal individual, the separate activities of these sentiments, that is, the instinctive urges, organized in relation to different objects, are co-ordinated towards the attainment or fulfilment of a purpose or ideal. It is this ideal which, consciously accepted by the person, organizes the sentiments, and which determines, in a case of conflict, which sentiment shall determine the actions of the individual. It is then of the utmost importance that this ideal shall be a worthy one, and here again is our opportunity as religious educators. We must see to it that, as far as it lies in us, we secure the acceptance of worthy ideals by our children as they grow up. It is here that religion can have its all-commanding place in the development of the self. Religion should supply the ideal.

If the ideal accepted by an individual is one of personal ease and pleasure, when a conflict occurs

between, say, the sentiment of social service (if such a sentiment happens to have been formed), and the sentiment of pleasure, the latter will win the day. Had the ideal, however, been one of service for God and mankind, the former sentiment would have been victorious. We see that we are still dependent on our instincts for our power and urge to action. The direction in which that urge will function, will, in the last resort, be determined by the ideal. The activity of the self, guided by the ideal, we call the will. The will is the organized self moving.

From this we can understand the importance of having a clear ideal and purpose in life. When Jesus said, 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon' He was uttering a profound psychological truth. If we attempt to organize ourselves with two ideals or purposes, at once all organization disappears. Each sentiment pulls its own way. The self no longer moves as a whole. The will disappears, and we are at the mercy of unorganized and unco-ordinated instinctive power. There is, psychologically speaking, no self where an attempt is made to serve two conflicting ideals. So we say that a man following a definite ideal which has organized his whole self, is a man of strong will. All his instinctive power and urge are directed to one object. So his self has the quality of strength and determination. This is his character.

Suppose you have a school. You have your pupils in their different classes. You have a clerk. You have servants. You have your teachers. Each pupil is in his proper class, and each teacher and servant has been given his definite work to do. You then

have an organization somewhat analogous to the personality of the young person organized into sentiments.

But the school needs a head. Too much time may be given to one subject. There may be a lack of balance in the work. One teacher may wish to prepare boys for one examination while another teacher has another examination in view. There is need of correlation between different subjects. So a head of the school is necessary to guide, to correlate, to keep the balance, to keep the whole school true to its purpose. The school with its head is like the personality with its ideal. The character of the school is the quality of its activities thus guided and directed. So is the character of the person.

Now it is possible to change the ideal which rules the self. Any such change will cause a change in the direction of the will. This change in direction may be small or great. If the head of a school leaves and another comes whose whole outlook on life and ideals are vitally different, then the whole character of the school will change. So with the ideals which guide us. This change of ideal is what we call, from the religious side, conversion. In some cases conversion means a complete right-about-face, a complete change of direction of the life and will. The new ideal of Jesus Christ which has been accepted by the person is the antithesis of the ideal which was directing the self before, and so the great difference in direction. In other cases the change in direction may not be so great. It depends on how far the old ideal approximated to the new. This change in ideal may make itself felt in a sudden crisis, or may be a gradual

process. Even where the change seems to be a sudden one, there are probably very few cases where it is not the final act in a process. Sometimes the fact that a process is going on is not known to the individual. There are other cases, especially among those who are brought up in Christian homes, where there is no conscious *change* of ideal. The full Christian ideal of life is gradually developed, and gradually takes complete control of the self, without having to displace any antagonistic ideal. Very often, of course, even in such cases, there comes a time when the ideal is fully understood and definitely and consciously accepted. This gradual acceptance of the true ideal should be the normal way of development and it should be the aim of parents, teachers and pastors to enable their charges to develop their personalities in this natural way.

## CHAPTER II

### SUBLIMATION AND REPRESSION

IN the last chapter we have seen that one of our tasks in religious education is the sublimation of instincts. Sublimation does not mean changing the instinct (an impossible task) nor does it mean diverting the particular kind of energy released by that particular instinct into some other instinctive force-channels. This is sometimes mistaken for sublimation. We are told not to waste our energy in fear. We are to conquer our fears and free the energy that we would have used in fearing and in trying to escape from the objects of our fear, in some other way. But that is precisely what we cannot do. If we repress our fears we do not get a surplus of pugnacious energy or of self-assertive energy. We merely store up trouble for ourselves later on.

Sublimation means action along the line of the instinct, but directed to a higher end. We do not repress the energy released by the arousal of the instinctive force, but use it for attaining a higher object. Thus the small boy fights his enemy with his fists or wrestles with him. The young man fights social wrong and injustice with his tongue, his pen and his influence. Both boy and young man are using the energy supplied by the pugnacious instinct.

Psychologically the *kind* of activity is the same. The young man, however, is striving for a higher end. He has sublimated his instinctive activity and emotion.

Since we are going to study the more important instincts in detail, and since we shall find that our great task is the sublimation of these instincts, let us consider briefly how sublimation takes place.

They may be sublimated by being organized into sentiments, provided that the focal centre of the sentiment is a worthy object. A sentiment formed round love of family will be a worthy one, and as a result of the various instincts concerned being attached to this worthy object, their activities will be worthy. It is better to organize one's pugnacious instinct so that it causes us to fight for our family, than for us to be in that state where it simply causes us to fight for ourselves. The instinct may be further sublimated, but at any rate the attachment of the instinct to the object of family has raised the functioning of the instinctive tendency to some extent. Mahatma Gandhi, by the formation of his sentiment for non-violence, sublimated his pugnacious instinct to such an extent that it manifested itself in his causing physical suffering to himself rather than to others. This then is the first step in the sublimation of instincts; the attaching of them to worthy organizing centres.

The next step is the one we have already considered, namely, the organization of the groups of instincts, that is of the sentiments, round a worthy ideal. This will again cause a further sublimation. The man who would fight for his family, may lay down his life for them if his self is organized round an ideal of suffering service. The man who at one stage would fight for

his country, may refuse to do so if his self is organized round Christ's ideal of the Kingdom of God and its methods. The man who at one stage thought first and last of how much salary his job would bring him in, may sublimate his acquisitive instinct if he accepts an ideal of the service of his fellow-men, until his attention is completely centred on the opportunities he can obtain for that service. Thus the acceptance of a worthy life-governing ideal is the second step in the sublimation of instinct.

In dealing with individual instincts, when seeking to attach them to worthy focal centres when forming sentiments, whether we are dealing with ourselves or with those whom we are seeking to guide, there are some things which we should keep in mind. We will find that if we do keep these essentials before us, we will be able to help the children who are committed to our care much more successfully, than if we leave things to chance and hope for the best.

The first thing to notice is the place which intelligence plays in this matter of sublimation. A true perception of a particular situation will bring a different form of the instinctive reaction from that caused by a false perception. In other words, a better understanding of our environment modifies our instinctive reactions to it. As an example of simple adaptation in which there is no sublimation we have the example of how during the war, when a position was being shelled, the natural line of action according to the instinct of flight and the feeling of fear was to go back. Intelligence, however, when brought to bear on the situation showed that often it was really safer to go forward.

Many of us decided to fight and went to the war, because the world situation and the factors concerned were presented to us in a certain light. We did not have all the facts of the situation before us. We made wrong implications from what we knew, and one of the instincts aroused, the pugnacious, led us to go to the war. Later when a better understanding of all the issues involved, and of the factors concerned was gained, that is, when a truer perception of the situation came, the instinctive reaction was changed, and now the pugnacious instinct leads us to strive and fight for peace and the League of Nations. Thus intelligence helped to sublimate the instinct.

An unintelligent Banya collects wealth, exercising his acquisitive instinct. He buries it in the ground. A more intelligent brother may use his money to build houses or to buy land. A still more intelligent brother may identify himself with his village or town, and spend his money on objects which will be of service to everyone. Intelligence has helped him to sublimate his instinct by enabling him to understand better his environment and the fundamentals of reality underlying it.

Intelligence again helps us to sublimate our instincts by enabling us to judge the merits of the objects round which we organize our sentiments. The intelligent person will understand the scope, probable consequences, and general effects of sentiments formed round certain objects. 'A thinking man is the worst enemy the Prince of Darkness can have.' The reason is that ignorance means the presence of a grave danger of forming unworthy sentiments. If the central core of a sentiment is an unworthy one, it is

very difficult, if not impossible, to sublimate the instincts attached to it. It is only a low form of intelligence that can make love of ease, or love of pleasure, or such unworthy objects, the centres of sentiments. Instincts organized round such centres will normally show no signs of sublimation in their activities.

Looking at things from the side of the instinct, it is necessary that both we, and also those whom we are trying to help, should understand what it is we are trying to sublimate. The teacher should clearly understand the nature of instinct, the particular instinct with which he is dealing at the moment, the lines along which it normally acts, the feeling that motivates and accompanies the action, and the lines along which it is possible to sublimate that action. It is no use trying to help a child to sublimate the sex instinct unless we know what this is, what the child is feeling, and how those feelings may be made the causes of worthy action. If we try to divert the energy released by the sex instinct into channels where the pugnacious instinct operates we can expect only failure. We must understand the instinct we wish to sublimate.

Although one cannot expect small children to understand our psychological make-up, yet as they grow older, the more we can explain to them about the forces that drive them, and the helpful and unhelpful methods of dealing with those forces, the more probable will be the success of their and our efforts at sublimation. It is a tremendous help for a young girl or boy to understand, at least in some measure, what it is he or she has to deal with, and the lines along

which the self-controlled and abundant life is to be secured.

In this connexion both educators and their charges should understand the difference between sublimation and repression, and the futility and danger of the latter. Repression means the attempt to drive the instinct out of our lives, or at any rate to prevent it showing itself in overt action. This latter we may for some time succeed in doing. The former we cannot do, and sooner or later the instinct, driven underground into the unconscious will make itself felt, possibly in most unexpected ways, which we do not connect with our repression of the instinct in question.

This method of repression is very common among conscientious young people who are really desirous of living good lives, and of curbing what they have been taught to regard as evil tendencies. A boy has a bad temper. He makes valiant efforts to control it. His method of controlling it is the negative one of bottling it up and keeping it down. The result is periodic outbursts of rage, when the cork blows out of the bottle, followed by feelings of shame and discouragement. If the boy had understood his nature better, and if those around him could have found worthy objects in connexion with which he could have used the powerful energy liberated by his strong pugnacious instinct, such as the performing of some difficult manual task (though not so difficult as to be beyond his powers), or some task in connexion with establishing a new and good custom in the school to which there is sure to be opposition, gradually his temper would have come under control.

Another boy has formed the habit of masturbation

which is so common. He knows no other way of dealing with the situation save that of desperately striving to drive the habit out, of repressing the instinct which leads to his action. He finds it too strong for him. Again and again he fails, until he despairs of ever overcoming it. Shame, discouragement, and hopelessness are his portion. But how different if he could understand the urge that is at the bottom of his trouble, and could engage in some creative activities! If he could be interested in some hobby such as woodwork, or Nature-study, with the making of collections and the cultivation of a garden, or writing or drawing, then he would be able to get his thoughts off his negative struggle to repress his instinct. He would be finding positive outlets, and by busying himself with creative activities he would sublimate his instinct.

Normally, repression will accomplish nothing of permanent value, and worse than that, will do positive harm. Everyone should understand and face his or her instincts, should realize what they are and how they may be used. One of our fundamental tasks as religious educators is to help our children, as they grow up, to understand themselves. Only as they do so will they be able to use the powers that God has given them.

A great many of the cases of shell-shock and nervous breakdown during the war were simply the result of men refusing to face their fear, and of refusing to admit to themselves that they were afraid. They tried to repress their fears, with the result that their fears had their revenge in other ways. The same thing is true of all instincts. There was nothing to be

ashamed of at the front in admitting that one was afraid. There is nothing to be ashamed of in any of our instincts. They are God-given and are intended to be used. We can use them aright only as, understanding them, we face them in the open. Thus it is of the greatest importance, from the point of view of sublimation, that we understand our psychological make-up.

Another point which must be watched by those who are aiding young people to sublimate their instincts, is that the particular line along which sublimation is suggested, is one which appeals to the individual concerned. Individuals differ, and the line of sublimation which suits one will not suit another. We cannot lay down hard and fast rules and say that the acquisitive instinct for instance must always be sublimated in this way, and the sex instinct always sublimated in that way. The particular end or means that we suggest will suit one case and not another. It will not result in the fullest life if the sublimation is unsatisfying to the individual. All we can do is to lay down general lines of direction along which sublimation can take place. This does not relieve us from the duty of understanding each individual, and finding out what his or her particular bent suggests as favourable lines of sublimation.

The actual definite activities will depend on many factors — individual likings, environment, opportunity, strength of instinct and so on. Thus we must know our charges individually if we are to be of the fullest help to them. Music and art and literature are all things which offer scope for creative activity. They are therefore all lines of sublimation of the sex-

instinct. But one child will be miserable if compelled to draw, while it has a natural liking for writing. Another may have a special aptitude for music and none for writing. In the former case it would be useless to try to sublimate the sex-instinct by setting the child to draw, and in the second case by setting it to write. Sublimation must take place along the line of natural bents.

Sublimation is not a thing which can be accomplished all at once. It is a gradual process. It is not possible to switch the instinctive activities into the highest channels at one touch. Just as the child grows gradually, so the process of sublimation is one which goes on gradually. As knowledge increases, as sentiments are formed, as the ideal gradually gains complete control over the self, so the process of sublimation goes on.





## CHAPTER III

### CONDITIONS OF GROWTH

WE cannot keep our children marking time, however much mothers would sometimes like either to keep them babies, or prevent them outgrowing their clothes. Growth of some sort is the rule of life, unless, of course, something is wrong and the child is ill. Just as the young tree uses the food it gets from earth, air, and sun, so the young child uses the materials it gets from its inherited store and from its environment, to develop its personality. Just as something in the environment of the young tree may bend it from its upright position, so something in the environment of the young child may change the direction of its life. Just as certain things are necessary for the growth of the young tree, so certain conditions are necessary for the growth of the personality of the young child.

We cannot carry this analogy of the growth of the plant with the growth of the personality too far. For one thing the child has the power of activity and self-direction, and for another it has the power to deal with environmental factors in a much more satisfactory way than can the tree. But one very useful purpose can be served by the analogy. This is to emphasize the unity of the organism. When we speak

of a plant growing, we mean the whole plant. We do not mean that its branches and leaves are growing while its feelings are not. Possibly the reason is that we knew so little of its feelings that we have not yet got into the habit of separating them out from the rest of the organism. With our children, however, we are too apt to fall into the habit of discrimination. We speak and think of the body as distinct from the mind, and of the mind as distinct from the spirit.

Admittedly, for the purposes of study we have to deal with different aspects of the personality at different times. But we are too apt to forget that, however much we may separate out things for purposes of study and discussion, in reality and in life they are not so separated. We think of and examine one instinct, but we must always remember that one instinct seldom, if ever, functions by itself, and that no state of emotion is composed of one emotion only. It is not true that at one time we do nothing but think, while at another we do nothing but act. I cannot think of my home without a feeling of some sort, and that feeling results in a tendency to act in some way.

In the same way we study our bodies as separate entities, but we must always remember that such a thing as a body without a mind and a spirit is unknown, except in the form of a corpse. A mind without a body is unknown in human experience; and so is a spirit. Even in spiritualistic séances the latter has some material form attached to it, and normally, as far as ordinary life is concerned, so far as knowledge goes at present, we cannot conceive of a spirit without a body, and certainly not of one without a mind.

Every human body has a spirit of some sort, good or evil.

What we have to deal with in the education of our children, is not bodies and minds and spirits, but personalities, which are body-mind-spirits. We do not know what the connexion is or how it works. We do not know what the relation between the physical brain matter and a thought is, but we do know that there *is* a relation, and so we can speak of a body-mind-spirit without committing ourselves to any theory of the relationship between these members of this trinity of three in one.

Remembering this then, that these three cannot be separated from one another in our children, we will take them separately for purposes of discussion and examine how each aspect of the personality grows, and the conditions necessary for growth. The first condition, however, which we have to remember is that these being three aspects of the one whole, the growth of the whole will depend on the growth of each part.

### I. THE BODY

A book such as this is not the place to go into questions of food and diet.<sup>1</sup> All that I wish to establish is the principle that to care for the body is one of the tasks of religious education. It is the duty of those who are anxious to secure the highest development of the personality to care for every part of that personality. Other things being equal, the mind and the spirit will be weakened if the body is

<sup>1</sup> See L. W. Bryce's *The Child in the Midst*, Chap. ii and Appendix.

weak. I know that cases can be brought forward where people with weak bodies, life invalids, have been saints of God. Also, in some cases it was their weakness that led them to a higher spiritual life. No one knows, however, what they would have been if their bodies had been strong, and the fact that their weakness led them closer to God is not an argument for us all having weak bodies. Normally a weak body will detract from the fullness and the power of the personality.

Jesus Himself must have had a very strong constitution. We never read of His being ill. Tired He did become, but He could never have done the work He did without a fine body. We know the importance He placed on health from the amount of time and energy He spent in making people healthy. It stands to reason that if a person is continually ill (with malaria for instance), his intellectual powers are affected and he certainly cannot do so much work for the Kingdom of God as he could if he were healthy. A person whose digestion is ruined by wrong food has not, as a rule, the most attractive kind of personality, as the jokes about retired Indian colonels indicate.

I do not mean to imply that we should all strive to be Samsons or Gamas, or should hold that sort of ideal before our children. There is a mean in all things. Samson obviously neglected the development of his intellect, not to speak of his spirit. It is, however, one of the important tasks of religious educators to see that those whose personalities are developing under their care are led to have a proper regard and care for their bodies. We cannot expect to be able to help personality to develop rightly if we

neglect one aspect of it. Many things will occur to us in connexion with our duties to the body aspect of our personalities. One that perhaps needs special mention is the value of fresh air. Blankets and sheets were *not* made to cover the face with. Windows *were* made to open. Taking classes in the open-air is infinitely preferable, from a health point of view, to taking them inside. The further we can get from the purdah system or anything like it, with its disastrous results on the bodies of its victims, the better chance we have of being what God meant us to be.

Cleanliness, although it is scarcely mentioned in the Gospels, has always been placed next to godliness; a significant juxtaposition. Exercise and games are necessary for the growth of the body for both *girls* and boys. Good plain food, according to a well-planned diet, with no eating between meals, and proper attention to the ordinary rules of health, these, too, are things which religious educators have to take into account if they wish to do the best they can for their children.

## II. THE MIND

There will be less questioning of the principle that the development of the mind is one of the tasks of religious educators. Yet it is a principle, which, however willingly it may be admitted in theory, is not honoured by practice as it might be, nor are the conditions and requirements of development met as they should be. Too often religious education, as indeed all education, is looked on as a process of imparting information, of filling up, of 'ram it in, cram it in'. Our idea of the development of the mind

is too frequently not so much guided by the concept of growth as by the concept of an empty barn which has to be filled, compartment by compartment. Needless to say, religion presented from the intellectual side as an indigestible mass of information is not going to result in the full personality which is our ideal.

In connexion with religion, there is a great amount of information which has to be assimilated by the child. Some of this information, to be sure, is not quite so important as we are prone to regard it, but still, there are facts which the child must learn. It makes all the difference in the world, however, how the child is trained to learn those facts and assimilate that information. Much more important than the facts is the way in which they become part of the mental equipment of the child, and how his mind is trained to react to them.

To achieve the fullest life the mind aspect of the personality must be active, self-reliant, and creative. In this department of our work, our greatest task is to train our pupils to think for themselves, and to train them to have active, creative minds. This, of course, applies to all education, but it is especially necessary in connexion with religious education, because with the data of religion there is so great a danger of the growth-destroying and soul-stunting use of authority, either absolute or mediated. There is nothing more necessary than to train our children so that they may be able to give a reason for the faith that is in them. So surely as we seek to make them accept religious dogmas or religious teachings, from the standpoint that these things are laid down

and must be accepted, and that it is wrong to doubt or question them, so surely will we be doing our best to stunt the growth of the mind aspect of the personality, and prevent our children from developing the full personality which they should achieve.

Growth of mind means growth in ability to use the mind, and the intelligence which God has given us. We cannot increase the amount of intelligence which we have inherited. But the use to which that intelligence is put, the scope of the subject-matter on which it is employed, and the ability to deal with life situations and with reality—these we can increase. They can be increased in one way and in one way only. That is by use, by self-initiated and self-directed use. Only as our children learn to think for themselves, to find out things for themselves, to experiment for themselves, to test things for themselves, to judge and decide for themselves, will their minds truly grow.

Our task in religious education then is to see that on the intellectual side our children accept no second-hand religion but develop a personal faith which, because founded on their own experience and not on the say-so of others, has a firm foundation.

In connexion with the growth of the mind there are three well-known laws of learning which we ought always to keep in mind. Learning comes from the reactions we make to situations in which we find ourselves. There are definite laws according to which our learning takes place.

(a) *The Law of Readiness.* In learning, or in the type of learning which results in growth of mind, there must be a desire to do something; a desire to

find out some fact; a desire to use some tool; a desire to acquire some skill; a desire to act in some particular way. If this desire to act and to learn is not present, learning is a very wearisome and soul-deadening process. If you take a small boy and set him down in front of a primer, tell him he is going to learn to read, and then start off to hammer away at it, unless in the boy some desire to learn to read is developed in some way, the ensuing process will be very dull and unprofitable, to say the least of it, for both teacher and taught. But if for some reason the boy has a keen desire to learn to read, how different does the work become. All this is a commonplace, but how often in our religious education do we consider whether what we are teaching has any definite relation to some felt need of those we are trying to teach. If the mind is to grow, the law of readiness must be observed.

True as this is of all education it cannot be too greatly emphasized in connexion with religious education. What relation did the forcing of children to learn the Shorter Catechism by heart have to any felt need in their lives? Many of us know that it has none, and that therefore we had no interest in it, unless some outside stimulus either of reward or punishment was attached. In our work today are we not sometimes guilty of forcing our children to learn off by heart things of which they do not understand the meaning, and for which they do not feel the need? Some children it is true, like learning things by heart, and in such cases no great harm is done. But for all, and certainly for those who find such work difficult, or have no liking for it, it is far

better for them to understand what they are doing, and for it to have some relation to some purpose they are carrying out, or some need they are seeking to supply. From the point of view of the growth of the mind it is practically always unwise to make children learn things by heart of which they do not understand at least something of the meaning.

(b) *The Law of Exercise.* We must *do* a thing again and again if we are to become perfect in it. This, too, is obvious enough, but, as we shall see later, it is not so commonly put into practice, especially in religious education, as it might be. Everyone who has tried to learn to play any game will understand how necessary is exercise and practice. Anyone who has tried to learn a foreign language knows that what has been learned must be used if success is to be achieved. Intelligence is like everything else. If it is not used, it gradually atrophies. Hence the importance of training our children to use their minds from the beginning. In the acquiring of habits and skill we should never allow them to rest content with theory, but should always insist on practice.

We set out to learn to play hockey. We read up the rules. We have conversations with those who are good players. We watch others playing matches. We buy a stick. But we still cannot play the game, and never will be able to play it until we get out on to the field and set to work to play ourselves. In the same way, we may read about courage, we may understand what courage is, we may be friendly with those who are brave. We will never learn to be brave until we have done brave actions ourselves. Theory without exercise is of very little use.

(c) *The Law of Satisfaction.* When we are learning to play tennis we hit the ball into the net or out of the court far oftener than we hit it into the court. We keep on practising the wrong thing. How then is it that we ~~ever~~ learn not to do it? According to our law of exercise we are practising a certain thing and therefore should be learning it. But we know that, other things being equal, we gradually improve and manage to put the ball more or less where we want it a good deal oftener than at first. Why are we able to do this? The reason is that when the ball hits the net or goes out we are filled with a feeling of dissatisfaction, and when we hit the ball over the net into the court we are filled with a feeling of satisfaction. It is this feeling of satisfaction when the correct stroke is made and the feeling of dissatisfaction when the incorrect stroke is made that enables us gradually to learn the correct one, even though we make the incorrect one oftener. The thing which gives us satisfaction is the thing we learn to do. When a boy is learning English and makes a mistake, the reactions of teacher, and maybe of class fellows, cause a feeling of dissatisfaction, and he does not learn what is wrong. When he says the sentence correctly the feeling of satisfaction which comes to him enables him to learn that version.

It is these three laws of learning, then, that govern the growth of the mind aspect of personality. They imply freedom and activity. There must be freedom for the child to pursue its own purposes and its own interests, to live its own life according to its needs as it feels them. There must be the activity which impresses on the personality the things learnt and

enables the child's mind to grow and mature and in increasing measure to grapple with its environment, to conquer it, or to adapt it.

The young learn best in the spirit of play. If the spirit of play is present, then we have no difficulty in applying our laws of learning. All children have the desire to play; all will play again and again; all will get satisfaction and pleasure from their play. Play, again, as in the case of animals, is a means of preparing for what comes later in life. The small girl playing with her dolls is preparing for the duties of motherhood in later life. The boy in the Scout troop is learning lessons of obedience and of leadership. If we can transform our 'work' with the spirit of play, we shall be in a fair way to success.

This also applies in religious education and especially in the more particular subject of Scripture teaching. With young children, the more of this that can be done according to play methods, the more interesting will it be both to teacher and taught, and the more permanent will be the results. Hence the value of dramatics, pageants, of making models, of handwork generally, of drawing pictures, and of the use of the imagination. Play can be every bit as useful in the Sunday school as it is in the day school, and is a psychologically sound approach.

This is the psychological basis of the project method, whether used as a method of religious education or of general education. When educational efforts are guided by the project philosophy the purposes of the children are utilized. They feel a need for soap and they therefore begin to make soap. As they make it they feel the need for certain pieces

of knowledge and information and so they get that required knowledge and information. In the end they have the great satisfaction of having planned out something for themselves, carried it through to a successful conclusion, and produced something by their own efforts. Moreover, it has been play, not work. Their activities are play activities. Thus their minds have grown because they have themselves found out things for themselves and have themselves done something for themselves.

### III. THE SPIRIT

In connexion with the third aspect of personality these same laws of learning also function, and the same principles of freedom and activity are absolutely necessary conditions of growth.

Our task in religious education is to find the spiritual needs and desires of our children, and to do our best to help them to meet those needs and satisfy those desires. This means that our educational effort must be related to the lives of our children. Hence the need for grading our work according to the age of the children, and according to knowledge and circumstances. Hence also the need for knowing as much as possible about the lives and conditions of those whom we are teaching. Otherwise we shall continually find ourselves flying in the face of the law of readiness and trying to implant in the souls of our children something for which they are not ready, for which they do not feel the need, and which they do not want.

It is no use trying to present high ideals of service in an abstract way to a child of nine or ten. He does

not feel any need for them, and does not see how they affect him. He may, however, feel the need for justice, for fair play and for loyalty to the group. These are things which affect his life every day. If we are to help the child to grow spiritually we must start from his life, not from any carefully and logically organized and elaborated plan of religion. The child's needs as felt in his everyday life are our starting point.

Then in the realm of the spirit how necessary it is for us to observe the law of exercise, and yet how often we neglect it. We are content to teach, to tell, and to exhort, and then we leave it there. We do not see to it that our teaching results in action. Yet there can be no spiritual growth without action and practice. Jesus knew this when He preached the parable of the houses on the sand and on the rock, in His interview with the rich young ruler, in the parable of the last judgement. It is useless talking and telling unless our pupils put into practice what they have heard. It is useless their thinking and feeling unless they act. In fact it is worse than useless, it is positively harmful.

'When a resolve or a fine glow of feeling is allowed to evaporate without bearing practical fruit, it is worse than a chance lost; it works so as positively to hinder future resolutions and emotions from taking the normal path of discharge. . . . All goods are disguised by the vulgarity of their concomitants in this work-a-day world; but woe to him who can only recognize them when he thinks of them in their pure and abstract form. . . . The weeping of the Russian lady over the fictitious personages in the play, while

her coachman is freezing to death on his seat outside, is the sort of thing that everywhere happens on a less glaring scale.<sup>1</sup>

Besides, what Overstreet calls 'ingrowing emotions' and 'ingrowing mentality'<sup>2</sup> we can have ingrowing spirituality. It is because of the danger of this that Jesus was always so insistent on action. 'This *do* and thou shalt live' is the soundest of healthy psychology. Doing is the *sine qua non* of living, that is, in the true sense.

In the development of the spirit-aspect of the personality the law of satisfaction and dissatisfaction comes to the fore in the matter of punishment. Can we make a child good by punishing him? The answer follows from what we have seen of the working of these two feelings. We can bring about a negative effect by means of punishment. That is, punishment being the association of an unpleasant result with a line of action, the feeling of dissatisfaction is engendered, and so the tendency is for the action with which the punishment was associated not to be repeated, other things being equal. We cannot create positive qualities of character by means of punishment for to do that we have to create feelings of satisfaction. Punishment has its place as long as we realize its limitations and do not expect it to do what it cannot do. I can punish my child for lying and make him dislike lying, but cannot, by that same punishment, make him love truth.

How then is the positive side to be developed? It is the development of the positive that constitutes the

<sup>1</sup> W. James, *Textbook of Psychology*, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> H. A. Overstreet, *About Ourselves*, p. 222.

real growth of the spirit aspect of the personality. With small children the project method again comes to our aid, and its religious justification is that it is a positive method which is founded on the laws of learning as applied to the spirit. The spiritual need of the child forms a starting point, and opens up channels of activity for the fulfilment of the child's purpose. This brings the feeling of satisfaction which will make the gain a permanent one. Moreover, it is a creative method and therefore an expansive one. When it is used, subjects and information are 'no longer abstract "subjects" to be learned. They are tools to be used.'<sup>1</sup> Let us underline that word 'used.'

A child feels the need for prayer. Something in his life or surroundings has made him feel his dependence on God. The teacher seizing the opportunity, is able to help him to pray and to give him guidance as to how to pray. So the purpose is fulfilled. Jesus thus seized on the felt need of His disciples. He did not try to force them to pray, nor to punish them when they did not.

The need of some community, such as leper children, is brought before girls and boys. This is a thing they can understand. The need to help these unfortunates can easily be felt. Leprosy is something in the experience of most. They can be encouraged to plan how they can raise money to help these leper children. Opportunities for work are given. Practical service is performed and the feeling inculcated that they have done it really for Jesus. It is in this way that growth of the spirit takes place.

Activity, as we have seen, is necessary. Freedom

<sup>1</sup> H. A. Overstreet, *About Ourselves*, p. 227.

is also necessary—freedom of choice. The child, if its personality is to grow in the real sense, must be allowed to exercise that freedom of choice which God has given it. Only so will character develop and the soul grow. From the point of view of religion as far as possible we should allow our children to make their own choices. There must be guidance and help and, of course, in cases where disaster is threatened, at times an over-ruling authority. But the less this authority has to be exercised, and the more we recognize the principle of freedom, the sturdier will be the growth of the plant we are tending. Freedom of choice is an absolute necessity for the growth of the personality.

At the beginning of this chapter the importance of the body in connexion with religious education was emphasized. I would like to close this chapter on growth with a plea for the abolishing from our minds and thinking of that false distinction between sacred and secular. Although for the sake of convenience we speak of secular education and religious education, there are really not these two kinds of education. The only education that is worthy of the name is an education which is truly religious, and in this should be included every activity of the child, every subject, and every adaptation to life.

This is not to say that there is not an 'education' being given which is purely secular. As we know to our cost in this country there is far too much of such 'education'. But it is not true education, nor can it possibly help children to develop their personality to the fullest. The only true education is religious education in the widest sense of the word. 'The

intellectual content of the Christian faith cannot satisfactorily be given as a part of a curriculum which otherwise is secular in its underlying assumptions. The essentials of the Christian faith should form the foundation on which a full many-sided life is built up. The Christian outlook and attitude should permeate every aspect of thought and conduct.<sup>1</sup>

If the object of religious education is to produce a full and free personality, pulsating with abundant life, every influence that is brought to bear on the child, and every reaction it makes to its environment is relevant to the fulfilling of the object. Truly speaking, the care of the body, the training of the mind, the information acquired by the mind, the way in which it is acquired, as well as the formation of habits of character are equally the concern of religious education. They are so inter-related that we cannot separate them, except in our abstract thinking. A slovenly mind is not likely to aid in producing an alert personality overflowing with the Divine Spirit. There is nothing slovenly in the Spirit of God. A dull, narrow, and conservative mind is not likely to enable its possessor to be of much service to the 'Living' God.

In thinking of religious education we must realize that we are dealing, not with one particular instinct or one particular aspect of personality. We are dealing with the whole personality, and seeking to raise it to its highest power. To do this every influence and every activity is either an aid or a

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Tendencies in Religious Education*, p. 43. (Report of Commission on Religious Education appointed by the Scottish Sunday School Union.)

hindrance. Therefore the religious educator must have his or her eye on the playing field, and the class-room, as well as on the home and the church and the school and the Sunday school. The way in which English or mathematics is taught will be either a help or a hindrance to the work, as will be the food and the exercise obtained by the children. Hence in our thinking on the subject, while for purposes of study we deal with particular aspects and with the special subjects of Scripture teaching and worship and so on, we must never forget that life is a whole and that we are ultimately dealing with the whole of life. Let us rid our minds of this false distinction between sacred and secular, and remember that this is the house of God, even if it be a hostel kitchen or a mathematics class-room.

## CHAPTER IV

### STAGES OF GROWTH

THE life of the child may be divided up into a number of stages, each of which has certain fairly well-defined and definite characteristics. It must be remembered, however, that although the characteristics assigned to each period are generally found in children of those ages, yet no one individual is exactly like any other individual. We cannot say that every individual passing through a particular stage will show all the characteristics usually shown by children at that age, or will show them in equal strength. All we can say is that these characteristics will usually be shown by the normal child of this age. In some, one quality or tendency may be strong, in others another quality. All our classification can do is to act as a general guide. It does not absolve us from the duty of studying carefully and watching each individual in our care, *as an individual*.

Certain more or less definite age limits for each period are also laid down. Here again this is simply a generalization. In the case of some individuals the passing from one stage to another may take place at an earlier age than in the case of others. We must watch our child, or children, and see for ourselves how things are going with them. The divisions again act

as general guides. Then, too, more or less definite limits are put to each period or stage. But we must remember that life is a growth. A boy does not suddenly cease to be a child and become, overnight, an adolescent, merely because he has had his twelfth birthday. The transition from one period to another is a gradual process, which takes longer in some cases than in others. Again, the ages given in the division are simply a general guide. We cannot lay down any hard and fast rules of demarcation.

A useful line of division is as follows:

Infancy	...	...	0 to	2½ or 3
Early Childhood	...	...	3 to	6
Transition	...	...	6 to	7 or 8
Later Childhood	...	...	8 to	12
Adolescence	...	...	12 to	18

Sometimes the transition stage is called middle childhood.

### INFANCY

Infancy is the period which starts with absolute helplessness. The child gradually learns to co-ordinate its muscular activities and to use its limbs in purposive fashion. The main object at this time is the mastery of the muscular and nervous co-ordinations and organisms. Thus the things which interest are those which provide stimuli for activity. The play which attracts is the kind which gives scope for activity of body and limbs, even though it be a very simple form of running round, jumping and so on. The main business of the parent is with food and leading the child to form regular physical habits.

'The importance of forming correctly certain essential physical habits from the first day of an infant's life has

rightly received great emphasis in recent years. The value of these habits is not only physical but moral, in that they help the child to self-control and an ordered way of life. It is actually easier to teach right living in the moral sphere to one who has learned the elements of correct physical living, than to one who has not.

These habits are concerned with the three elementary functions, eating, sleeping and elimination.<sup>1</sup>

### EARLY CHILDHOOD

Again the most noticeable characteristic of this period is physical activity. One marvels at the inexhaustible stores of energy the small child seems to have. Play is the predominant interest, and games in which there is repetition and stories in which there is repetition are the ones which appeal. Especially towards the end of the period, 'pretend' games are popular, though apparently not so popular with Indian children as in the West. Dolls for instance do not figure so largely with the Indian child, though probably poverty is the reason for this. Certainly there is no lack of interest in such things if the opportunity is given.

It is very important at this stage to supply ample opportunities for energy to express itself, and also for the imagination to function. Encouragement of the imagination at this stage has important results at later stages of development. Hence fairy tales of *the right kind* (in which there are no objectionable fear elements or horrors of any kind) should play a large part. Children of this age and of the transition age to follow have no difficulty with certain Bible stories, about which doubts may rise at a later stage.

<sup>1</sup> L. W. Bryce, *The Child in the Midst*, p. 4.

There should be especial care at this stage not to repress the child's desire for activity. We must not expect him to keep quiet, and there is no reason why he should be kept quiet. 'The results of repression are seen in irritability and nervousness, friction and unhappiness, a weakened will and character. In this light the old practice of making the children sit through long hymns, prayers and lessons stands condemned. There must be opportunity for constant change of posture and freedom of movement. Hymns, prayers, and picture talks must be all of the shortest.'<sup>1</sup>

In Bible teaching as in all teaching due advantage of this desire for activity must be taken, and hence we have the sand-tray, small plays, modelling and such things. The development of the child depends on this activity. It is therefore a dangerous thing to try to prevent or repress his desire to be doing something, to be on the move, to be exercising himself. We must use this desire for activity, not seek to repress it. In our dealings with children there is usually far too much of the negative. We are continually saying 'Don't do that' and 'Don't do this'. 'Don't' is a word that we should use very seldom in our dealings with children of this age. If we find ourselves continually using it, then we ought to take it as a danger signal that something is wrong.

'If the child is constantly withheld from doing by the word "don't," he cannot reach the fullest development of character. Furthermore, character is not built negatively but positively. A building can never be erected by merely keeping out of it all unworthy material. There must be an actual putting together of brick and mortar,

<sup>1</sup> D. F. Wilson, *Child Psychology and Religious Education*, p. 150.

and the great truth is evident that whenever a place is filled by the good, the bad is in that very act kept out, whether in buildings or character. The motive back of many a "don't" is worthy, and often there may be no alternative but to instantly check an action, but for the effect on character building, there is a more excellent way than repression. It lies in the expression suggested in the law of activity, but *expression under supervision.*<sup>1</sup>

One of the outstanding aspects of this age is the curiosity shown by the child. His day is one long series of questions. We shall be studying this subject later in Chapter XIV. Suffice it to say here that again repression is the last thing in which we should indulge. The future well-being of the child, intellectually, morally and spiritually, depends on our encouraging this spirit of curiosity, however wearied we may get of the endless stream of questions.

In both this period and the preceding one, imitation plays a large part. The child imitates other children, imitates its parents, imitates anyone with whom it comes in contact. Naturally this has great potentialities for good or for evil. From this tendency to imitate, habits are formed, and the activity imitated becomes part of the life. Children tend to become like the people they imitate.

On the emotional side the self is the centre of the feelings. Joy and sorrow follow the effects of little things on the child himself. Usually selfish though the child is, occasionally one finds beautiful acts of generosity and unselfishness. The child's feelings are easily aroused and easily changed. He bears no malice. Injuries are swiftly forgotten and forgiven. There is

<sup>1</sup> A. A. Lamoureux, *The Unfolding Life*, pp. 41-42.

no such thing in his life as race or national or colour prejudice. These things he learns, to our shame, as he grows up. The strength of such prejudices in the world today is a sobering thought for us who are parents or teachers or pastors.

### TRANSITION, OR MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

As the child approaches the period of later childhood, with its quite definite characteristics, he begins to be more independent. He goes to school, or leaves the kindergarten and goes to a proper school. He is learning not to depend so much on his parents and on his home. This often shows itself in disobedience in the home, which, somewhat curiously, can be quite marked, while at the same time in school there is practically no sign of insubordination or disobedience. The school is beginning to take the chief place in life as the object of loyalty.

There is more responsibility shown at this period although it is a time of instability as compared with the period to follow. 'Up to a point, children of, say, six and seven years of age do begin to feel themselves leaving the ways of infancy behind, and do seem to want to be treated as more responsible, capable of harder tasks, and of higher standards of behaviour.'<sup>1</sup>

This transition period is often a period of growth and of susceptibility to disease. Children get tired more quickly than before or after the transitional stage. At the end of the period the brain is almost full-weight.

There is still a strong element of individualism in play, and the child is still self-centred. The imagi-

<sup>1</sup> S. Isaacs, *The Children We Teach*, p. 19.

nation is also still active. This is an especially favourable time for Bible plays and for stress to be laid on training in the sphere of the feelings and the imagination. Care has to be taken to see that Bible stories which are told do not have a bad affective result. The story of the Crucifixion has been known to thoroughly upset sensitive children of this age. If a child is easily affected in this way, then such stories must be left till a later age. Questions are still incessant at this period.

### LATER CHILDHOOD

This is a comparatively stable stage. Energy is abundant because the rate of growth has decreased, and energy and enthusiasm are therefore set free for other objects. In Indian boys there is a marked difference between the enthusiasm normally shown at this age and that normally shown by adolescents. This is possibly partly due to the bogey of the matriculation examination which overshadows the life of the early adolescent and very often makes him unwilling to engage whole-heartedly in any activity which does not seem to contribute any aid to the task of passing the examination. Among girls, the purdah system and the responsibilities of approaching marriage in non-Christian communities tend to curb an enthusiastic life. But whatever the reasons, my experience with boys has been that life is lived much more enthusiastically and whole-heartedly by the small boy of from ten to twelve or thirteen, than by his elder brother.

At the same time life for the child of this age is a much freer, more irresponsible affair than it is later

on. His future has not begun to weigh with him (I am thinking primarily of the child who is at school), and even though in the case of many an Indian boy and girl the matter of getting a decent meal each day sometimes weighs heavily, and the lack of it saps vitality and energy, yet he can be easily persuaded to forget his cares for a while. It is possible also, even with boys at this stage, to give a certain amount of responsibility and to develop the beginnings of a sense of duty and of responsibility. This has been done in classes of boys averaging about eleven years of age, where committees in the class took charge of laggards in their houses, and coached them in their class-work so that they might not disgrace their houses too desperately.

This irresponsibility, coupled with abundance of energy, constitutes both a problem and an opportunity. The development of the child demands that we supply him with plenty of ways of using this surplus energy. The opportunity comes because children are usually much more ready to accept our suggestions, and are much more easily guided than they are at a later stage. It is not difficult to interest the boy or girl of this stage. They are not so critical, not self-conscious, and although there is a growing feeling of independence, they still do not repudiate all authority.

The main problem, however, centres round the wise use of energy. Wolf Cubs, Blue Birds, games of all descriptions suitable for the age, (more individual for the younger end of the period gradually working up to team co-operative ones at the older end of the period) gardening, work in the home, work in the hostel, activities in connexion with the Sunday school,

or in connexion with junior Christian Endeavour committees, school projects, hobbies; along any of such avenues, energy can be directed and a wise use made of leisure time.

Children of this age are usually frank, and say what they mean. Literalism is marked. They are matter of fact and there is not the same tendency to use the imagination that we find in younger children. There is a desire for exact statement when information is asked for. Usually there is not the affectation which sometimes comes later. They require therefore freedom from affectation in those who teach them and guide them. Frankness and simplicity in their teachers and guides are appreciated.

Very noticeable at this age is the gang and its activities. This is found in India just as in the West. Small boys of ten, eleven, twelve, get together in parties, and things usually begin to happen! Orchards and mango trees suffer. Some unfortunate individual who is disliked by members of the gang gets a rough time. A stray donkey has his life made more burdensome than usual. But this gang organization which usually results in things being done which would never be done by any of the individuals in the gang, if they were left to their own resources, is always directed towards finding an outlet for surplus energy. Hence the value of such organizations as Wolf Cubs and Blue Birds which take the tendency and direct it to useful and social ends. A house organization in a school can serve the same purpose. It is important that we should enlist the gang on the right side. It can be a powerful enemy or a powerful ally.

In the West this age is marked by a love of tools

and instruments. There is a great desire to make things and to do something with tools. The style of education in vogue in most places in India gives little chance for this tendency to make itself felt, but the same desire is in Indian boys, and given half a chance, they will show it. In our Scripture lessons we should recognize this and provide ample opportunity for making models, drawing maps, making pictures, making stage properties—anything which will cater for this desire to make things.

At the same time this age is also characterized by a strong desire for reading. Book after book will be devoured. This, however, does not seem to be usually the case in India. Our boys do not seem to develop or show any great desire to read books. There are reasons for this. One is the lack of suitable books in the vernaculars. A desire for reading is discouraged if nothing can be found to read. There is very little reading done in the average home. In a great many, none at all is done. The boy or girl is not brought up in the atmosphere of reading and books as are so many in the West. The emphasis placed on English and the step-daughterly treatment meted out to the mother-tongue in India is another thing which militates against the development of a desire for reading. There may be other reasons. The fact is undeniable and one of the tasks facing religious educators is the providing of good healthy literature in the mother-tongue. It is at this period that a beginning in the developing of taste should be made. The best way to prevent a boy from eating unripe mangoes is to give him ripe ones to eat. The best way to cultivate a good taste in books is to give our

children good books to read. This is the time to cultivate the habit of reading the Bible.

It is in this period that hero worship begins. Too much care cannot be taken to see that it is a desirable type of 'hero' which appeals. At this age it will be the acts and doings which will appeal rather than motives and morals.

'The hero of any period must inevitably embody that which the life most admires at the time, hence physical strength and skill, courage and daring will be prominent factors in a boy's hero in this period. This hero may be, perchance, the physical director of the Y.M.C.A., the champion baseball or football player, an explorer or adventurer, a desperado, or—happy case—a father who has not forgotten how to swim and fish and hunt and play ball. A boy always longs to place his father on the throne of his heart, if he is given the chance, but the fathers who covet that place enough to pay the price for it are too few.'<sup>1</sup>

Religious educators should do their best to present as heroes those whose acts and deeds are noble and worthy. It is now that the seed is planted which will grow into the ideal which is to rule the will and guide the life. No one should be placed on the hero pedestal who will have to be dethroned later on. The dethronement may tarry, and the life be ruined.

#### ADOLESCENCE

The period of adolescence, from about twelve to eighteen, is the most important, as it is the most difficult, of the various stages of growth. It is ushered in with physical changes in both girls and boys, those in girls taking place somewhat earlier than those in boys. The beginning of the period is a time

<sup>1</sup> A. A. Lamoreaux, *The Unfolding Life*, p. 119.

of rapid growth, resulting in a loss of control of the body and the limbs, which makes the adolescent awkward and clumsy. It is also the time when the sex organs and bodily characteristics develop and come to maturity. Due to this, and to the sex instinct making its urge felt strongly, the period of adolescence is often thought of, and spoken of, as a period of difficulty, of stress and strain. This is to a certain extent true, though it has probably been emphasized more than necessary. Adolescence need not, in normal cases, involve a great deal of stress and strain, though some there is sure to be. It is a time when new adaptations to the environment, especially the social environment, are being made, and therefore contrasted with the period of stability which precedes it does seem to be a time of uncertainty, and sometimes of grave difficulty.

A good deal of the difficulty depends on the foundations laid beforehand, especially in connexion with the attitude the child has been trained to adopt to sex matters. If this has been sensible and matter-of-fact, and if the physical changes coming are explained in the same matter-of-fact, taboo-free way, a great deal of the difficulty will disappear. At the same time, wise and sympathetic guidance and help from parents and teachers are absolutely necessary for the adolescent if he or she is to emerge from the period with a strong, well-balanced personality. Especially is wise guidance and help necessary in matters of religion.

This period is an awakening time when ideals begin to appeal, and have a powerful effect on the personality, especially in connexion with the organiza-

tion of the self and the building up of sentiments. As the period advances, the person chooses the ideal that will finally direct the organized self or will. From the beginning of this period the religious educationalist should pay special attention to the objects round which the instincts tend to cluster. Such clustering will, in many cases, have begun before adolescence, and should always be a matter of concern, but now should have especial attention paid to it. The results of what takes place now will be most difficult to change. The sentiments are beginning to take on the character of habitual dispositions. As boys and girls grow up, it is essential that high and noble ideals be placed before them, and that they should be encouraged to choose, as the directing ideal of their lives, that which will enable them to live the fullest life.

Another important point in this connexion, to which I have referred before, is that *choosing* the ideal is not enough. Action in accordance with it must be encouraged, and as many opportunities for action as possible, given. A decision to serve God and His Kingdom is of little value unless it begins to have a very definite result in the everyday life of the one who has made the choice.

In connexion with this matter of choosing an ideal, the teacher, parent, or pastor must be very careful to see that no wrong force is used in order to compel a decision. There are many wrong methods in vogue which do far more harm than good, because they secure a decision which does not rise from an inward acceptance of the ideal, but has been made because of psychological forces brought to bear on the boy or girl in a way that is

not fair to their personality and does not respect that personality. The natural way is for a boy or girl gradually to accept the ideal, to grow into it, led by the example and teaching and guidance of parents, teachers, and pastors. There will always be cases of sudden decisions and sudden revolutionary changes, especially where a struggle, conscious or unconscious, has been going on in the life of the person concerned. But we should not look on this as the normal way, nor should we attempt to make use of illegitimate crowd emotion and excitement to force decisions.

This danger has to be watched the more in that adolescence is a time of susceptibility to influence. We will study the question of suggestion in a later chapter. This power works very strongly during adolescence. The youth is very sensitive to criticism and to praise, and teachers and parents have to be very careful how they indulge in criticism and fault-finding.

We must recognize here the importance in adolescence of the suggestive concomitants of regular study and organized instruction. It is most essential that at this stage the more intangible but more important elements in education should be recognized and used by parent, teacher, and pastor. Just as in the teaching of a piece of poetry the teacher's attitude to the poetry has a marked effect in developing a true appreciation of poetry, so in the Scripture lesson the teacher's attitude will have a vital effect on the attitude towards the Bible and towards religion that is developed in the pupil. This is the great argument against compulsory Scripture lessons. Compulsory religious exercises or compulsory Bible teaching will

normally have a bad effect on the attitude of pupils towards the greater issues of their relationship with God and His worship. Knowledge they may be forced to imbibe. A true relationship with their Heavenly Father will never be developed by compulsion or by anything with which compulsion is connected.

In the same way the suggestive effect of the religious service, always important, is especially so during adolescence. The general effect of what is done, and of the way in which the service is arranged must be carefully considered by those responsible for the service. This does not mean that there should be an elaborate ritual. The simpler the form of service the better. Nor does it mean an elaborate building. An out-of-doors service can be as impressive as a cathedral one; to many of us very much more so. Just as human beings differ in other things, so they differ in the way in which they approach the presence of their Heavenly Father. The pastor and the teacher will know their children, and will know the form of service which will make the greatest appeal. The whole should be dependent on the needs and desires of those who worship, and not on any preconceived ideas of their own. But one thing they must remember. The concomitants of worship, the spirit of it, and the general inspiration which it gives, more than the forms of words, are the things which will affect the adolescent. The latter are simply means to an end, and are to be used, changed, or dispensed with, as found necessary.

The influence of books is still great during this period. The great desire for reading, which is

characteristic of the previous period, also extends into adolescence, if it has been allowed due scope in later childhood. It is, therefore, one of the tasks of Christian educators to see that adolescents are supplied with the right type of books. All that was said about the need for literature in the mother-tongue in connexion with the previous period applies equally strongly here. Possibly the present need for good healthy literature in the mother-tongue for adolescents is even greater than for younger children.

The beginnings of the powerful force of 'izzat' make themselves felt during this period, and as the period advances, this force grows in strength. Those dealing with adolescents have, on the one hand, to be careful how they deal with the 'izzat' of their charges, and, on the other hand, to try to guide them to a truer idea of 'izzat' than that which is usually met with; the 'izzat' which would lead to the washing of the disciples' feet. Mistakes made with adolescents can frequently be traced to a disregard of the 'izzat' of the youth. It is better that we should allow our own 'izzat' to suffer rather than that we should run the risk of upsetting one of those whom we are seeking to aid in the abundant development of his personality.

Adolescence is a period when there is often a lack of self-confidence, especially at the beginning and in the earlier part of the period. During the previous period, a fairly high degree of control of the body and co-ordination of mind and body is achieved. The physical changes and the growth which come with adolescence disarrange this control, which has to be regained. This feeling of uncertainty, exemplified for instance in the breaking voice, tends

to destroy self-confidence. I think this is not so noticeable, or so general, among Indian as among western boys. Individuals will differ of course, and at any rate for the first year or so of the adolescent period, there is not the same certainty and confidence that is possessed by the smaller boy. In this connexion team games are of great value. The individual feels that he is one of a number, is not left entirely to his own resources, and does not have to depend wholly on himself. Thus gradually he gains confidence.

As boys and girls grow and pass the first stages of adolescence, and even in the first stages, care should be taken to help them to develop a sense of responsibility and powers of leadership. The measures taken for this should be graded. The lack of confidence which has been noted must be taken into account and while giving responsibility is one way of dealing with this lack, it must be done gradually. Responsibility is to be given in small things first. It is essential, however, that as the boy or girl advances through the period of adolescence, he or she should be given more and more responsibility. Definite arrangements should be made in home and school for training them to look after themselves, and for leadership. Adolescence is the time for this.

Especially is this necessary in India at this time. One is apt to find signs of irresponsibility and a definite shrinking from assuming responsibilities in Indian boys. When responsibilities are undertaken, there seems also to be a lack of a proper sense of duty with regard to them. This is found in other countries too, but is certainly present in India. It is not because Indian boys are less capable of

developing a sense of duty and a sense of responsibility than others, but because there is a defect in the training given them. This is but one aspect of the defect in social sense that is so marked among Indian children, for which again the homes and the parents must share the blame with the schools and the teachers. This again is due to neglect of the development of the instincts concerned, and of a failure to sublimate. It is therefore one of the primary tasks of religious education in connexion with adolescents to employ every means possible to develop this sense of responsibility. As a matter of fact, as I have said, my own experience has been that this training may be effectively begun with boys of ten, eleven and twelve.

Adolescence is the time of emotional development. It is the time when there is a distinct development in appreciation of the arts—poetry, literature, art. The appeal to the emotions meets with a ready response. This is why it is the time when ideals appeal. The most powerful of the emotions is undoubtedly love, and the way in which it, a new and powerful factor in life, comes into prominence at this stage is one reason why the former stability of life is upset, and the period becomes one of stress and strain. In the West this period as it advances is characterized by friendships between boys and girls varying in intensity, but usually taken very seriously by those concerned. In India there is so little co-education and so little mixing of the sexes at this stage that such friendships are not common. The whole idea of boys and girls meeting is looked on as dangerous. The fact that there is this segregation of

the sexes at this stage is, of course, responsible for the prevalence of unnatural vice among boys and probably makes the whole problem of dealing with adolescents more difficult, though it must be admitted that certain problems which are common in the West are not common in India.

It is foolish to deny the naturalness of the sex instinct, and to do so will not help us in sublimating and so controlling it. It is one of the fundamental developments of adolescence and this we must recognize. The subject is further dealt with in Chapter XV.

'The period which sees the rise of the sex interest is also characterized by the making of important friendships, a tendency to hero worship, an intense loyalty to the school or college or other group with which the individual is associated, and a sympathy with those who are less fortunate in human society; in short by the appearance of new or intensified social emotions other than those of sex.'<sup>1</sup>

Hero worship, as we have seen, is characteristic of the previous period. Hero worship is also characteristic of adolescence, but it is the character and the moral victories and struggles that help to make the character, which are the aspects that appeal to the adolescent. The ideals that inspired great men are admired. This characteristic can obviously be made use of in our efforts to suggest and inculcate worthy ideals. This is particularly the case when the youth comes to the point where he is considering his life-work and what it is going to be.

The adolescent is a being who is beginning to understand his powers. He is beginning to under-

<sup>1</sup> Olive A. Wheeler, *Youth*, p. 41.

stand his relation to the world around him. He is beginning to understand that there are political and social and economic problems, which, though international in scope, yet affect him. In other words he is growing up and beginning to feel himself a man. It is therefore well for adults who deal with the adolescent to treat him as a man. There should be no attempt to treat the adolescent as inferior. We will never have any real influence with him if we do so. This is especially true in India, where, as we have noticed, 'izzat' looms so large on the horizon. This is one reason why the group-discussion method (see Chapter VIII) is very useful with adolescents. But whatever method we use, we should treat boys and girls of this age as equals, and should make them realize that we understand and respect their developing personality, and are not attempting to impose our superior selves and our superior wills on them. Incidentally this consideration cuts out corporal punishment, which may be harmful to adolescents.

Sympathy and consideration are needed in the fullest measure in dealing with adolescents. We should try to remember our own difficulties, and our own resentful feeling of being misunderstood, when we were passing through the same stage. This is but to reiterate once again the principle that runs through all modern educational theory and practice, namely, that we can be successful only as we know and understand our children. Important and essential as this principle is at every stage, at no time is such sympathy and understanding more necessary than at the adolescent stage.

It is always true that Satan finds work for idle

hands to do, and it is as true at this stage as at any other. Our problems with adolescents will be greatly simplified if we can provide a full and busy life for our children. I am not here subscribing to the fallacious theory that if we tire a boy out we help him to control his sex instinct. But the right use of leisure will help to keep life balanced. This right use of leisure should be one of the results of true education. It is certainly one of the objects of religious education. Games, social activities, scouting, guiding, play-writing, drawing, handwork, gardening, all such activities wisely organized and supervised will be of immense value in helping our boys and girls over the period of readjustment till the time when their personalities are once more co-ordinated by the ideal they have accepted.

I have mentioned the peculiar value of the group-discussion method in religious education of the adolescent. Another method which could be of great value in religious education in the particular subject of Scripture at this stage is the Dalton Plan, or some modification of it. This is an individual work system. Adolescence is an age of thinking, when the child can be led to think for himself. If Scripture teaching were less a matter of preaching and more a matter of children finding out things for themselves, testing things for themselves, and arriving at conclusions for themselves, it would at once be more interesting and more valuable. Under a system such as the Dalton Plan, what are known as assignments are made out. These are really plans of work in which the pupil is told what reading he is to do, what special things he is to look for, and is given questions

to solve or to answer. In the assignment may also be given practical work to be carried out. References are given to books which are to be consulted and the time in which the work should be completed is indicated. The pupil works away at his assignment either by himself or in company with others. If any difficulty arises which he cannot solve, he is free to come and consult the teacher who is always present to give help as needed. He may also consult other members of the class. When the assignment is finished he comes to have it tested and to show what he has done. Occasionally, as necessary, the teacher has conferences when the whole class meets together and the teacher takes them as a whole. This is a method which has been quite successful in other subjects, and there is no reason why it should not be successful here also. It is very well-suited to adolescents, especially as it gives the teacher the chance to deal with his pupils as individuals and not *en masse*, a most necessary procedure at this stage.

#### AN EXAMPLE OF AN ASSIGNMENT IN SCRIPTURE

##### *The Character of Peter*

Turn up the following passages and read them carefully. As you read them note down in your notebooks what each one tells you about the character of Peter.

Mark 1: 16-18.	John 13: 1-12.
•Luke 5: 1-10.	John 13: 36-38.
Luke 9: 28-36.	John 18: 10.
Matthew 14: 22-33.	John 18: 11-27.
Mark 8: 27-30.	Acts 2: 14.
Luke 22: 31-34.	Acts 2: 37-40.

Acts 3: 1-11.  
Acts 4: 1-22.  
Acts 5: 1-15.

Acts 10: 1-48.  
Acts 11: 1-18.  
Galatians 2: 11-14.

In connexion with Peter's confession read also the chapter in *Simon the Zealot* on the subject. Read also the chapters in *Simon the Zealot* on Gethsemane and on the Trial before the Priests, and compare what the author has to say about Peter with what you think yourself.

Study Peter's confession carefully and see if you can understand why Jesus was so happy when Peter made it.

Did Peter make the confession because he thought he ought to say something like this or because someone had told him? What was the reason for his making it? Did he really believe what he said? What do you think should be the foundation of our religion? What part of your religion is founded on your own experience?

Come to class prepared to discuss the following question:

Was Peter a brave man who was sometimes cowardly, or was he a coward who gradually became a brave man?

Write the answers to the following questions in your books.

1. Why was Peter the leader among the disciples? What were the good qualities which he showed which made him the leader?

2. What is the lesson that we learn from the story of Peter and Cornelius with regard to caste and class distinctions and feelings?

Write down the things you can do to help to break down such distinctions and feelings and try to put at least one of these into practice.

Note the qualities which are necessary to make you successful in what you try to do.

3. Read John 21: 12-19. What effect do you think this conversation had on Peter? What method does it teach us for making good after failure?

## CHAPTER V

### FEAR

THE instinct of flight or aversion, with its accompanying emotion of fear, is one which plays a very great part in our lives, and indeed, in all departments of life. The instinct is called into action by any set of circumstances which threatens us or those with whom we are closely associated. Anything which suggests danger or the possibility of danger, anything which is unknown or strange and therefore potentially dangerous, will result in an instinctive tendency to run away or to do something to avoid the threatened danger or to free ourselves from it in some way. In later life the instinct shows itself strongly in a very great dislike for change or anything which threatens to upset the *status quo*.

The type of action in which the instinct culminates may vary. A child meeting a snake may run away or may stand still. In a position of danger, if flight appears useless, we may attack the fear-causing object with whatever weapon we have. We may be so paralyzed by fear that we cannot move. The normal reaction is to run away or to find shelter.

It will be seen that this instinct and its accompanying emotion serve a useful biological purpose. Fear keeps the small child from becoming too familiar

with the *jungli* dog which might bite him. It causes him to run to his parents when he sees something strange and unusual which might possibly injure him. It makes him careful in adventuring into places where he might be in danger. This biological function of the instinct of aversion makes itself evident right through life. The instinct causes us to look both ways for the approaching motor car before we venture across the road; to be cautious how we deal with something unknown in the food line, or how we deal with those who are physically stronger than ourselves.

As we have noticed, however, even in the physical realm this instinct can defeat its own purpose. Where the emotion of fear is extremely strong it seems to destroy the power of action, and the subject seems unable to lift a finger to save himself from the threatening danger. His fear has deprived him of all power. In the physical realm this is seen plainly in the paralysis caused by fear. It is also seen to a lesser extent in the insane efforts of the panic-stricken to escape, when self-control goes by the board and will and intellect are both overwhelmed by the force of the fear. The very force and overwhelming flood of fear defeats its object, and the victim is rendered unable to take coolly the measures necessary to ensure the escape which his fear-maddened, and therefore uncontrolled, activity fails to effect.

If this is so in the biological and physical realm, it is much truer in the moral and spiritual realm. Here fear is the great enemy of power, and is of very little value in the development of the personality. There is this further disadvantage: that of all the instincts fear is the most difficult to sublimate. It is sometimes

said that it is impossible to sublimate it. That is probably a rather extreme statement and we shall see that there is at least one direction in which the sublimation of fear may take place. It is true, however, that avenues of sublimation are very limited.

Fear plays a very great part, far too great a part, in our personal life, in our social life, in our economic life, in our national life. As I have said, fear is the great enemy of power and control. If we examine our own lives, we shall see how it plays havoc with a great deal of our work. We are afraid to show initiative and work along our own line lest we offend our employer and lose our job. We are afraid to speak our minds for the same reason. We are afraid of disease; we are afraid of accidents; we are afraid of the future; we take anxious thought for the morrow; we are afraid that we will not get our rights; we are afraid that we shall not get what is due to our 'izzat'. We have no confidence in ourselves, no belief in ourselves. We lack the courage to believe that God has purposed a work for us. Because of these fears we lose a great deal of the power we should have. It may be admitted that in certain of these matters, such as the fear of disease, if not allowed to run to excess, the fear does serve a useful purpose. But too often it takes possession of us to such an extent that it far exceeds the limits of usefulness.

We find the same thing in our social life. We are afraid to do anything which is contrary to custom and usage; we are afraid to break with public opinion; we are afraid of being laughed or sneered at; we are afraid of being thought eccentric; we are afraid of breaking with family traditions; we are

afraid of going against the customs of our village although we know full well that they are wrong; we cannot break the chain of extravagance in connexion with marriages because we are afraid of what other people will think and say.

In our national life we see the same evil effect of this instinct which was meant to be the servant of man but which has become, in many cases, his master. We fear another nation and madly pile up armaments not pausing to think or realize where our fear-inspired efforts are leading us. We are afraid that our trade is suffering and we erect tariff walls. We are afraid of the infiltration of other peoples and so we do our best to keep them out of our country. Our fear has such a hold on us that in our desperation we cannot see past the symptoms of evil and, blinded, try to deal with them and leave the root to flourish and send out fresh shoots as fast as we cut off the old ones.

What then, in our education can we do with this demon of fear? Are we justified, in view of the dangerous potentialities of the emotion, in making use of it?

Let us consider, first, the question of punishment. When we punish a child, we usually bring in a strong element of fear. The common idea, especially with corporal punishment is that the fear of getting the punishment will prevent the child from again doing the wrong deed for which it was punished. We have already seen that punishment, by causing dissatisfaction has a negative effect. From the point of view of invoking fear, this is still more true. In so far as the punishment invokes fear, to that extent will its

effect be negative. The dissatisfaction is caused by the fear of the unpleasant thing happening again, and so fear may prevent a child from doing something, but can never teach him to do anything. This cannot be too much emphasized, as it is a fact that we do not commonly recognize. You may prevent a boy from eating green mangoes by giving him a dose of castor oil. But you will never teach him obedience to your orders, or to what he knows to be right by your punishment. You may punish a boy for throwing rubbish about the school compound. By the fear of your punishment you may prevent him from doing so again, but do not be under the illusion that you are teaching him habits of tidiness and cleanliness. He will simply throw the rubbish somewhere where he thinks you will not see it. Punishment and fear can have only a negative effect.

It is, of course, necessary that we should employ this negative force. If only for the boy's digestion it is a good thing that he should be prevented from eating green mangoes. It will be seen, however, that it is a second-best and that we cannot, by means of it, hope to accomplish anything really constructive in our work of aiding our children in the development of their personalities. Our policy should be to employ the negative force of fear as little as possible and in ever-decreasing measure as the child grows. The more we can employ constructive measures and agencies, the less need will there be for the use of fear.

What constructive measures can we take? I shall try to illustrate what I mean with reference to obedience and discipline.

We usually associate the word discipline with the idea of order and strictness connected with the army. The army is popularly supposed to be an institution which shows us the last word in discipline, and the kind of discipline found there is the ideal which many schools and teachers and some parents adopt. It is, however, a fallacy to suppose that the army type of discipline is real discipline, or even a type to be desired. Schools which model their efforts to secure it on the methods used in the army are doomed to fail, as far as securing any really valuable results are concerned.

The dictionary gives the meaning of 'to discipline' as to bring under control, to train to obedience. These two words, 'control' and 'obedience' are significant, for they are precisely the two things which the army type of discipline does not develop. You have a class of small boys in front of you, and for some reason you command them to sit still. Some do and some do not. You scold those who do not; you threaten them. They sit more or less still. If you are sufficiently determined and sufficiently frightful, you will, in time, train that class to sit perfectly still when you command them to do so. You can, if you wish to, in time, train them to turn as one man, to stand up, to sit down as one, to remain perfectly quiet when you tell them to do so, to carry out your orders at once with precision. A visitor to the class exclaims at the perfect discipline and obedience of your class. And it will certainly appear on the surface that the discipline is good. The class-room, however, is not the place to judge that. Whether your discipline is real discipline or not will appear outside

the class-room, and away from school and the operation of the fear with which you have inspired the members of the class.

Your visitor has exclaimed on the perfect obedience of your class. But is it really obedience? Is it not much more likely to be prudence that your class is displaying? Have you trained them really to obey, or have you trained them to act in certain ways in order to escape unpleasantness and punishment? If the class keeps such perfect order and carries out your commands simply because of fear of the punishment that you will give them if they do not, then what you have succeeded in teaching them is prudence and nothing more. To test the truth of this put in charge of your class a teacher whose methods are different, who does not punish so much, nor use the fear of punishment as a weapon, and see how orderly the class is until they have got accustomed to the new methods and until they have learnt true obedience and discipline under him! As soon as the fear of punishment was removed, so soon disappeared the pseudo-obedience on which you prided yourself.

As I have said, the army is supposed to be the place of discipline, par excellence. If this type of discipline could teach self-control and train men in orderly habits of obedience then the soldier should show it better than anyone else. But what did we find during the war? While outwardly under strict control, of real self-control there was very little. When on leave and away from the control of officers and associates, the average soldier, during the war, showed the utmost lack of self-control, which simply meant that all the discipline to which he had been

subjected had been merely a superficial thing and had not helped him to develop the virtues of self-control and self-discipline in the slightest.

The fundamental fallacy underlying all such methods and systems of discipline as conform to the army type, is the idea that discipline is a thing which can be imposed from without or above. Really, true discipline cannot be imposed. It must grow and develop from within. This can be done only by self-initiated efforts or by measures with which the learner identifies himself or herself. As long as there is a strong element of fear operating, and we seek to impose our will, we may get order and quietness, but we shall not get real obedience or real discipline.

This does not mean to say that we must go to the other extreme and simply allow children to do what they like without any control or restraint. It is necessary at times to apply restraint from outside. But we should understand what we are doing and not imagine that we are teaching one thing when, in reality, we are teaching something entirely different. As far as possible our efforts should go into enabling our charges to learn self-control and self-discipline, and we should recognize that this can be done only by enabling them to exercise control which is motivated by themselves, and that when we impose control and our will on them, we are, if not actually defeating our own aims, at least not making any progress towards realizing them. To learn self-control the child must wish to control himself or herself. Our problem is to make the child wish to do this. True discipline can be learnt only by the child applying the discipline himself or herself.

It will be seen that this is a much more difficult thing to bring about than to impose control from without. We have to train our children to control themselves. It is comparatively easy to make children sit still, supposing we consider it necessary for them to do so. It is much more difficult to train them to sit still of their own accord because they want to. Yet this is the ideal that we should have before us whether we are teachers or parents. We have, in some way, to enable our children to feel that they are obeying rules because they want to obey them, or because they see the necessity of obeying them. We have to enable our children to see the reasons for such rules as are made and such orders as are given, so that they will give their willing consent to them and learn to obey, not from fear of punishment but because they understand why obedience is necessary and what the good reason for obedience is.

How then can this be done? Can it be done in the case of every order which we have to give, and every rule which we have to make?

If children are to understand why an order is given, and are to feel that they ought to obey it, obviously the best method of dealing with the situation is that the children should have some part in the making of the rule and in the giving of the order. If full responsibility cannot be given, at any rate co-operation should be secured. This is why any system of self-government in schools is a tremendous aid in the development of real discipline. Pupils make rules for themselves. They therefore understand why they are made, and they naturally do not object to obeying them. This is also the

reason why, under systems of self-government in schools, the more children who are associated with the activities connected with the organization, the better. If only a few pupils are left to make rules for all the rest, the position is still one of authority imposed from without, the difference certainly being that now the authority is chosen by the children themselves, whereas formerly they had no say in the matter. But as many pupils as possible should be given a share in making rules and regulations. Needless to say any system where the officers, such as prefects, are appointed by the school authorities, and not selected by the children themselves, is of very little use.

It is not to be expected that, especially in the early stages of school life, nothing is to be imposed from above or that children can be left to do everything. With smaller children there are, of course, many things concerning which they cannot be expected to frame rules for themselves or to give orders. In connexion with these things rules and orders have to be imposed. As children grow and develop, however, the number of matters in connexion with which this has to be done, will gradually diminish, until finally they become able to discipline themselves in practically everything. Even in the early stages with children of five, six, seven, eight, when an order has to be given, the greatest care should always be taken to explain the reason for it, and to gain the assent of the child to the order if at all possible. The imposition can in this way be greatly lessened. This applies in the home just as much as in the school.

In the development of true discipline, games are a very valuable aid, and should altogether take the place of any sort of military drill. Physical drill and exercises are necessary, but games can do everything that ordinary drill can do and a great deal more besides. In a game, the players, before starting to play, accept the rules according to which the game is to be played. They wish to play, they wish to play a certain game, and therefore they wish to play according to the rules of that particular game. This is a self-imposition. They may by common consent make new rules or make a new game, but they know perfectly well that to get the enjoyment they want they must have rules. When they are playing they obey the rules, not because they are made to, or have been frightened into doing so, but because they want to. They want to win the game and they know that if they break a rule they will give their opponents an advantage. So they learn self-discipline. Thus, in any school which aims at teaching true discipline, games should have a very definite place in the curriculum. This does not mean, as is so often the case, that a few selected pupils are given opportunities for playing. Every boy and every girl should have opportunity for regular games. Games should be part of the regular curriculum and parents should insist on their children taking part in team games.

The same principles which we have been discussing hold good in any sort of group competition, whether of work or play, and especially where rules and arrangements are made by the children themselves. Certain rules are laid down according to which the competition is to be conducted. Each competitor

should be followed, because then the child can understand the reasonableness of the punishment.

This brings us to the question of the authority of the parent. Now the authority of the parent should not rest on any idea of superior physical strength, or simply on the fact that he or she is a parent. True authority in the home rests on two things, love and justice. The small child does not have to be taught to trust and have confidence in his parents. Their loving care from the time he is born is responsible for the child's trust, and in normal cases the child has implicit trust and confidence in his parents. Here is one basis of the authority of the parent. The other basis is in justice. Nothing will undermine the authority of a parent more quickly than injustice. If our dealings are just then it is possible to explain the reason for an order, and whenever possible this should be done. If this were made a rule, then on those occasions when, in case of emergency, we have to give a peremptory order, the child would have got into the habit of understanding that we never gave an order without good reason, and so would obey it.

As a matter of fact, we usually give too many orders and make too many rules. The fewer we can get along with the better, and the more ideal will be our family relationships. It is essential, however, that whenever possible, and there are really very few cases where it is not possible, we should explain the reasons for our orders. As children grow older and more reasonable it is more and more possible to take them into our confidence and make the family a really co-operative affair.

Real authority must rest on love and justice and

not on fear. It is true of course, that children in a family where authority does not rest on fear may not appear so 'disciplined' as those brought up on a régime of fear. But there can be no doubt that their personalities will be more healthily developed, there will be a more ideal relationship in the family, there will be a freedom and a courage, a capacity for self-expression and a responsiveness that will not be found in the fear-encircled household.

For religion it is of the utmost importance that in this matter of fear, as in other matters, family relationships should be on a right basis. The child inevitably gets his ideas of God from his parents, and his thoughts of God will correspond to his thoughts of his parents. If he is afraid of his parents, he will also be afraid of God, and there can be no greater calamity in the life of a child than that he should grow up learning to be afraid of God, and nothing more contrary to the spirit of Jesus. If the child has been accustomed to love and justice in his dealings with his parents, then he will have no difficulty in thinking of God as his loving heavenly Father.

There have been cases where people have never been able to find the comfort they should have found in the idea of the Fatherhood of God, simply because of a wrong fear relationship with their earthly fathers. The same principle applies in a lesser degree to teachers. All dealings with the child by those in authority will either aid or retard him in his understanding of God and in his growing up into a right relationship with God. That relationship should be one of love and not of fear, except in so far as fear is sublimated.

The question then arises, should we teach the fear of hell? Apart from the question of whether we believe in a material hell or not, there is no division of opinion about the reality of punishment of sin: Should we try to make our children moral and upright by continually holding before them the fear of eternal punishment if they do what is wrong? As we shall see later, Jesus used this weapon of fear very little. His usual emphasis was on the positive side. This much is certain, that we cannot develop true morality in our children so long as we depend on rewards and fear of punishments as motives for conduct. In this matter the same principle which we have discussed before holds good, namely, that just as punishment itself will have a purely negative effect, so fear of eternal punishment will also have a purely negative effect. It will not and cannot produce positive qualities of character. There is no doubt that there are times when such a negative effect is needed. As the child grows in Christian nurture, however, these times should become fewer and fewer. Conversions, so-called, brought about by playing on the fears of people, especially on the fears of adolescents (while being immoral) rarely result in the fullness of life that results from a consecration of life motivated by love, unless later love drives out fear.

In the education of our children we should be extremely chary of teaching them anything that will undermine their natural faith and love of God. Let us avoid, as the plague, all such teaching as would give the idea that God is a sort of policeman-judge, an all-pervading spy, continually on the watch for us doing wrong things and always ready to punish us for those

wrong things. That God is a just judge is true, but His justice is sublimated in love and it is the demonstrating of this love which must be our fundamental task in bringing our charges into a true relationship with God. This is why it is absolutely essential to let the child make his first approach to God through the life of Jesus, and not through the stories of the Old Testament.

Practically the only way in which fear can be sublimated, so that it has a positive value, is in the direction of the cultivation of the spirit of reverence and awe, so essential to true worship. This should come after the foundation of love has been well laid, and will function in adolescence. The raising of fear to reverence is a process, however, which will go on gradually throughout the child's life. Stress should not be laid on it. It is largely a matter of atmosphere and feeling which is caught rather than taught, though a useful approach can be made in the case of those who do not catch it through an elementary course of astronomy. The atmosphere of Church, of Sunday school, of Christian Endeavour meeting, of school worship, of family worship—all these should be sufficient to infect the child with reverence. But this is assuming that such services are carried out in a spirit of true worship and reverence. If we have the true interests of our children at heart, we will do our best to see that this is the case. Often we find reverence lacking in our Church and other worship services. There are many places where a little sublimated fear in the hearts of the congregation would be a good thing.

This does not mean to say that we must have an

elaborate ritual. The spirit of reverence can be present in the simplest service imaginable. It is not the building or the ritual that makes the worship true. It is the spirit in which the service is conducted.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE HERD

IT is a matter of common experience that we like to be in the company of our fellows. Normal people do not like to live alone. There is a craving for companionship which is one of the strongest cravings of human nature, and one which has most important results. This feeling or desire for companionship is the result of what we call the herd instinct and shows itself in the way in which not only human beings but also animals get together in groups or herds.

In its simplest form it shows itself in a simple desire to be with others. Animals, such as goats and sheep, seem to find satisfaction simply in being along with others. This soon develops a value for purposes of firstly, defence, then, offence. Small birds will sometimes band together and defend themselves or their young from a crow, and the defence easily changes into offence. The same development is seen in animals, such as the wolf, which hunt in packs. The highest development of the herd instinct is seen, in the case of animals, in such species as the bee and the ant. Here there is living together not only for purposes of defence and offence if necessary, but also for specialization of function. The fact that large numbers of ants live together and work together

means that certain definite duties can be performed by some, and other duties by others. The level of co-operation is reached, and because of this specialization is possible.

Now in man we see the same development, and the same stages. We like to be in a crowd or with other people whether we know them or not. We prefer living in the company of others to living alone. This is due to the survival of the old feeling of the need of being together in a crowd for purposes of defence. Though not necessary now, the old necessity still has its emotional survival. We see it today in the habit of walking up and down the bazaar. We may have no special purpose in going up and down the bazaar, but we do it simply because we like to be in a crowd. The most terrible punishment is solitary confinement, where the prisoner is kept absolutely to himself with no human society whatever. The strength of the herd instinct may be gauged from the fact that men go mad from solitary confinement.

But simply living in a crowd is not enough for the normal human being. It is better than nothing, but we also want to feel that we are an essential part of a crowd, or of some section of it. We want to know and have communication with members of the crowd. Anyone who has been alone, a stranger in a big town, one of a huge crowd of people, yet knowing none in it, and having no relationship with any one in it, knows the intense feeling of loneliness that can sweep over one. A human being is not satisfied with being physically one of a crowd. He must be socially one also. A more satisfying relationship than just 'being one' is needed. Because of this we have the development of organi-

zations, societies, clubs, parties, where people meet together for a common object or objects, where they feel that they 'belong' together, where they have common desires and aspirations, and work and co-operate together. We have seen how this development shows itself in the 'gang' activities at the ages of nine to twelve.

Now it is obvious that this development into organized crowds or societies has very big advantages as well as some dangers. In the first place, as in the case of ants and bees, it allows specialization. Every member of the organized crowd does not have to be able to do everything necessary for his well-being, himself. He can do one particular work which is of service to the particular community in which he lives, and can rely on others to supply other needs of his in return for his supplying one of their needs. Thus an organized crowd or society gives scope for specialization and all the progress which this means.

Then, in the second place, the organized crowd gives scope for much stronger and better action than is possible to any one member of the crowd. In a crowd a person can do more and can act more nobly than he could if he were left to himself. The urge of the crowd carries him out of himself and lifts him on to a higher plane. It is a much harder thing for a Congress volunteer to endure the lathi blows when he is by himself, than when he is with a number of his fellow volunteers.

But there is also the very grave danger of the opposite tendency. A crowd will do evil things which no one member of the crowd, if left to himself,

would ever do. Just as the member of the crowd may be lifted on to a higher plane if the object being pursued by the crowd is a good one, so, if the object is a bad one, the members of the crowd may be dragged on to a lower plane. Most members of crowds that have committed communal atrocities would never have done such actions if they had been by themselves. It takes a crowd to drag people down to the level where they are willing to carry out a lynching.

One reason for the greater power of a crowd for good or evil, is, of course, its greater physical power. The physical resources of all the individual members are pooled. But it also seems that the mental and moral, or immoral, resources are also pooled. This is certainly the case where we have an organized group such as a society, or club, or discussion group. This is one of the big advantages of the working of the herd instinct from which we can gain the greatest benefit in our educational work. We shall deal with this in connexion with group discussion in detail in Chapter VIII.

In the course of the education of our children the dangers and benefits of the working of the herd instinct are of the greatest importance and require careful consideration. Let us consider, first, the dangers against which we have to be on our guard.

### 1. THE DANGER OF CONFORMITY

There is always a danger that members of a crowd, whether it is an organized one or not, will tend to conform to some common position or pattern. It is difficult to go against the crowd, to be different from

everyone else. The herd instinct works for conformity because lack of conformity tends to disintegration. Our natural impulse is therefore to do the same as everyone else in our crowd, to think the same, to feel the same, to have the same ideals as everyone else. We even strongly dislike dressing differently from others in our particular crowd. This is made use of in such organizations as the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides where the uniform develops a sense of belonging to a special group and strengthens the feeling of unity in that group.

If we are members of any particular group, we are very sensitive to the voice of the herd as expressed by our group. An outstanding example of this sensitiveness to the voice of the herd, and the resultant conformity, is to be seen in the caste system of India. The strength of this resultant uniformity, and the forces behind it, has been shown by the opposition which has gradually gathered way against Mr. Gandhi's efforts to bring the Harijans into the Hindu caste fold.

The herd instinct is thus a conservative force which acts against change, and, of course, has a useful function to perform in this direction. The forces of conservatism, however, are not forces which need strengthening, and our aim must always be to do our best to make sure that this conforming tendency of the herd instinct is not allowed to grow so strong that it is able to defeat all attempts to secure change and progress. Above all we must seek to prevent all conformity which is simply an unreasoning answer to the voice of the herd. An instructed conformity is unobjectionable; but we have to set our faces

against our children learning to do what others do, simply because others do it and for no other reason.

In school work this tendency to conform will also make itself strongly felt. From an early age, right up into adolescence, conformity with what is 'done' and a strict eschewing of what is 'not done' is one of the most noticeable features of child life. Boys and girls deal faithfully, and sometimes most cruelly, with any who dare to leave the beaten track. As we shall see when dealing with the instinct of pugnacity, that force can be developed as a counter power to be used against a too strong tendency to conformity. As far as possible, however, we have to see to it that the traditions and customs to which our boys and girls will inevitably conform are worthy and ennobling, and also (and this is most important), that they should, as far as possible, be led gradually to understand why these traditions and customs are really noble and worthy of loyalty.

When introducing some new feature which we hope will grow into, and gradually come to form, an integral part of our school life, we usually do not neglect to explain the reason for what we are doing. What we do often neglect to do is to be careful to keep on explaining as the years go by. Yet if we do not do this, it means that the following generations of pupils are blindly conforming, blindly obeying the herd instinct. Even though that to which they conform is worthy and noble, we are making a great mistake in training them to simple conformity. Our training will result in conformity to that which is unworthy.

Is not conformity in the religious sphere then, a

good thing? Should we be heretics? Are we to try to make our children heretics? The answer will usually depend on that to which we are required to conform. We can safely lay down the principle, however, that conformity in religion is a dangerous thing unless it is the result of a free choice, and unless it simply marks a stage in progress. To treat conformity as an end is to put a bar across the road of progress. In the history of religion, the priest has stood for conformity and conservatism. The prophet has stood for freedom, for individualism, and for progress. His path has been marked by suffering, misunderstanding and death. But to my mind there can be no shadow of doubt that it is the ideal of the prophet rather than that of the priest that we should hold up before our adolescents.

‘The lonely prophet of a larger truth must, in any age, suffer as Jeremiah did. He is bound to be misunderstood and attacked. He must expect to be scorned and vilified by those whom he disturbs. Truth is very precious and very *costly*. It is only those who are ready to pay the price for it that can be its disciples and torch-bearers. But when they are sincere, patient, enduring, humble, reverent, brave and allied with God, they do, in His own time carry the precious standard forward.’<sup>1</sup>

The ideal which we ought to place before our children as they grow up, and the attitude which we ought to seek to guide them into, is such a one as Dr. Rufus Jones here describes. Naturally everyone cannot be a prophet. But everyone can have the attitude of mind of a prophet, the attitude which tests everything, refuses to accept anything simply because

<sup>1</sup> Rufus M. Jones, *The Church's Debt to Heretics*, p. 254.

it is the generally accepted belief, and develops a first-hand experience of God. Only as we help our children to have this attitude to life shall we be able to help them to be true followers of Jesus, the greatest of those in the prophetic line.

## 2. NARROWNESS OF INTEREST

The working of the herd instinct brings people together in social groups and, resulting in conformity to the standards and ways of that group, develops a loyalty to the group and what it stands for. The danger here is that the individual may remain with his interests limited by the bounds of the group, and may not progress in loyalty to ever enlarging groups. The child's first group is the family, and his first interests are wrapped up with his family. Then comes the school when his loyalty is enlarged and attached to a larger group. Then perhaps comes his caste, then his village or town. Religion may come in next, or a political group. Finally, comes his country. I have said 'finally' because in so many cases it is true that the country or nation is the final object of loyalty. There are cases, of course, where the enlarging loyalty does not get as far as country. There ought to be a further step and a further advance to the international group of mankind. If the herd instinct is left to take its natural course and is not sublimated, it may cause the individual to rest in any of the groups mentioned, but he will certainly never reach the international group. As a matter of fact we can all think of those whose instinct is still functioning on the family level.

The lack of sublimation is seen in all cases of intolerance, whether it is religious intolerance, national

intolerance, class intolerance, or as we have in India, communalism. Intolerance simply means that we cannot think beyond the group in which we happen to be, and in connexion with which our main interests lie. It is inadequately developed loyalty which is bounded by too limited lines of demarcation. The greater the intolerance the less the measure of sublimation which has taken place.

The sublimation of the herd instinct, until it issues in a true internationalism, is a slow and gradual process in which there can be no jumps. Loyalty must grow from group to group. In each stage the way in which the interests of the group in which the child is at that time 'herding', are bound up with the larger group, must be carefully explained. The pupil can be brought into touch with practical problems in his village where a refusal to advance from one group to a larger one has made life difficult and narrow. In connexion with the Bible period in school, the gradual enlargement of the herd loyalty of the Jewish nation from the patriarch to the tribe, to the confederation of tribes to the nation, to the internationalism of Jonah in the Old Testament and the final world vision of Jesus and of Paul in the New Testament, can be brought home as opportunity offers.

The herd instinct may thus be sublimated into a force for internationalism. It may become a weapon against the selfishness of the individual and of the nation. It may also be sublimated into a force working for co-operation and all that is involved in co-operation. In its raw and natural functioning the instinct simply brings people together. But if an ideal is supplied and ways of attaining that ideal are

suggested, then co-operation will be brought into play. There is not usually much coherence among a group of small children in the first or second classes. If, however, that group, feeling a need, under the guidance of their teacher, set out to fulfil their need, (in other words, plan and carry out a project) they cannot fail to learn the lesson of co-operation. In the same way by such group projects as staging a play, preparing a magazine, caring for the school garden, team games, carrying on a discussion group, this lesson of co-operation may be continued right through school life, and the herd instinct sublimated in this way. The project method is particularly valuable in the early stages of school life in this respect.

In seeking to utilize and sublimate this instinct one should be particularly careful to avoid, as far as possible, all forms of individual competition. The competitive spirit may be used, but should be used in group competitions. The school may be divided into houses and competitions held between houses so that the individual learns to forget himself in the interests of his house. The Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides, in making the patrol the unit, and not the individual, teach the same lesson.

There is a community of feeling in a crowd which accompanies the working of the herd instinct. A crowd seems able to feel together. There is a communication of feeling one to another. Anger surges through a crowd and kindles in the hearts of members of the crowd, even though they may have a very vague idea of what they are angry about. The ease with which communal riots arise is an example of this. In a crowd, feeling is contagious. Now this contagion of

feeling may be sublimated and particularly in connexion with worship.

One of the necessities of public worship is just this community of feeling and emotion. The object of ritual is to arouse it. But whether elaborate ritual or a simple form of service is used, we should strive to fill our service with the emotions of reverence, adoration, and love. Ritual is not, of course, necessary. These feelings may be aroused just as successfully in the Quaker meeting as in the Roman Catholic cathedral. The methods will vary with the individuals who are worshipping. But anything which would detract from the creation of community feeling should be rigorously excluded. Anything that we think, knowing our community, will aid us in arousing this community feeling and in sublimating it, should be brought in. This is one argument for the performing of religious plays in connexion with our church services. The drama is a most potent means of arousing feeling, and can be of great assistance in creating a focus of feeling which will secure the communion of emotion and thought which we desire.

Music again may form a source of feeling, and may also be a communion-forming agent in the hearts of the group. Dr. L. P. Jacks writes, 'The other night I was listening to a very remarkable performance of community singing, and the thought flashed across my mind . . . that somebody, without knowing it, had discovered a potent means of promoting harmony and good temper and the spirit of friendly co-operation among the masses of mankind.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Adult Education and the Arts.* Quoted by H. A. Overstreet in *About Ourselves*, p. 202.

This is the spirit that music and singing can bring to our worship, and in this way they can give us that community of feeling of the mind which we need. But singing where one-third of the congregation sing; another third sing here and there, while the remaining third sing not at all, will not accomplish our object. In our young people's worship as well as in adult's worship we should try to get everyone to take part, and should lay great stress on the community aspect of what we are doing. We are at the service to give as well as to receive.

What has been said shows us one reason for such institutions as the Junior Church. It is almost impossible to conduct a service that is mainly for adults, so that children may also share in the community feeling. This can be done satisfactorily only if the children have a service of their own, with their own hymns, prayers, and arrangements. We shall see that there are also other psychological reasons for children's services, but from the point of view of getting the most out of the worship, it is certainly advisable to have children worshipping in a service of their own.

Pictures are another aid in the sublimation of the herd instinct in connexion with worship. Just as a play focuses the feeling and emotion and is an inspirer of emotion in all, so can the picture do its part. In our Indian churches there are practical difficulties in the way of securing the inspiring pictures that we need for this purpose, but pastors and teachers should always be on the look-out for such pictures, and should not hesitate to use them if they get a chance.

We have been discussing the community of feeling which is the result of the functioning of the herd instinct. The instinct also has the same result in the realm of the mind. There is community thinking. In coming together for worship we need to have our minds attuned as well as our feelings. In meeting together we ought to learn how to share our thoughts and to give and to get that which will be of value to the thought-life of the group. We will therefore deal next with the children's sermon, which is a focusing of the community thought in worship, and with discussion groups which is a method of sharing in the thought-life of the group and of contributing to that thought-life.

## CHAPTER VII

### COMMUNITY THINKING: THE CHILDREN'S SERMON

IN Scotch Presbyterian churches a feature of the Sunday morning service is always the children's sermon. It consists of a short address lasting for eight to ten minutes, and is prepared especially for the children of the congregation. Though it is thus especially for children, it is often followed by the adult members of the congregation with as much attention and interest as the sermon proper—if not more. The fact on which the justification for the children's sermon rests, is that the children are present in church, that they will be unable to follow the ordinary sermon, and that they should get something from the sermon part of the service. The inclusion of a children's sermon in the service is, in fact, an attempt at grading.

In some churches the practice is followed of the smaller children leaving the service after their sermon and their special hymn are over, before the adults' sermon commences. Though from some points of view this is perhaps not desirable, it is probably preferable to making small children sit through half an hour of something which they cannot understand, and in which therefore they are not interested.

The children's sermon, however the arrangement is made, is a recognition of the fact that there are children in the congregation, and that what may be suitable for adults may not be suitable for them. It is an attempt in connexion with Sunday worship to meet the need for grading that is so felt in other departments of child life, and to try to help to guide the collective thinking of the children as they come together for worship. The attempt may not be a very adequate one, but with services as they usually are at present, children's sermons are a very necessary feature, and are an attempt to meet a very difficult situation, where, in the same service, the thoughts of both adults and children have to be directed.

Even where a much more successful attempt to meet the situation is made, and separate services are organized for children, and junior churches are established, the address still has its place as the focusing point for the community thought. Just as class teaching and occasional exposition will always have their place under any method of teaching, so the children's sermon will always have its place under any scheme of worship. And even in a children's service, or in a junior church, the giver of the address will still feel that he is attempting the impossible when he tries to give an address suited to a number of ages and classes.

Whether the children's sermon is part of an ordinary church service, or whether it is the address in a junior church, the minister is faced by the fact that he is trying to interest and benefit children whose ages vary greatly. Is he to speak to the adolescents? If he does, what will the younger ones get from the

sermon? Is he to speak to the little ones? Then what will the older ones get out of it? I suppose most of us consciously or unconsciously try to strike a mean and usually speak to children somewhere between the ages of nine to eleven. In reality, of course, from an educational point of view, the minister is set an impossible task, and whatever he does he has to cater for one section of his audience, and hope for the best for the rest.

One way of meeting the difficulty, to some extent, is for the speaker to have a regular time-table according to which the children's sermon is prepared for different ages. On one Sunday it may be for the youngest children, on another for those of ages nine to eleven, and so on. If some such method is not used, and the sermon is not for any special age or group, it is, of course, always wise to err on the side of suiting it to the younger element in the congregation, whether it be part of an ordinary service or an address in a children's service. There is no doubt, however, that preparing a sermon for a definite age is the better plan, even if each group gets its own sermon only once a month or so.

This means that in preparing his children's sermon the speaker must keep his audience in mind. This is perhaps a platitude, but it needs emphasizing. The minister knows, or ought to know, his children. If it is a teacher giving the address he too knows his children. He knows their conditions of life and what they are doing. His sermon must have some relation to the lives and experience of his small listeners. It is not much use talking about money to children who rarely see it. If the audience is mainly compos-

ed of children living in a boarding school, there will be very definite problems and difficulties in which they need help, which will not be just the difficulties and problems of those living at home. In a general way, doubtless, the problems of life are the same for all, but one thing that a children's sermon should at all costs avoid is vagueness and generalities. It should deal with concrete situations connected with the lives of those whom it is intended to help. It cannot do this unless the speaker knows those to whom he is speaking.

Not only should he know the conditions of life of his audience, but he should know something of the content of the minds of those to whom he is speaking. He may know this in a general sort of way, but something more definite is needed. The minds of the children also need to be prepared for what he is going to tell them. In school the usual way of doing this is by questioning the children to find out exactly what knowledge they have, with which the new information may be associated. Such preliminary questioning also serves to make the pupils' minds ready for what is coming. Now there is no reason why the same method should not be used at the commencement of the children's sermon. It may seem strange at first to ask questions and get answers in church, but it will soon lose its strangeness, and there is nothing irreverent in it. One is blindly working in the dark unless one is able to find out exactly what knowledge of the constituent elements of the sermon the children have. Naturally, as time goes on the pastor will get to know his children, and will have a fair general idea of their knowledge. But if such a procedure is necessary in the day school,

where the teacher has a much better idea of the knowledge of his pupils than the pastor has of that of his children, it is certainly necessary in connexion with the children's sermon. The preparation of the children's minds is also of the greatest importance.

Then again, if the speaker keeps his audience steadily in mind when he is preparing his sermon, he will avoid the mistake of wasting time sermonizing about things for which the children have no real need. (Here, of course, we again meet the necessity for grading the sermon.) A great deal of our educational effort goes into making children listen to and learn things for which they have no use. And if they cannot feel the use of a thing it is difficult to get the real interest which will make it of real benefit.

'A London child of five was discussing education. He could not yet quite read, he might easily make mistakes in his counting, he was full of wonder at the world.

"What do you learn at school?" he was asked.

"Lots of things."

"Tell me one."

"About coal-mines."

"Do you know much about them?"

"No, really not *very* much. My teacher doesn't either, but she does her best. You see we have to learn coal-mines because the school says so."<sup>1</sup>

I fancy not a few children could say, 'We have to listen to it because the minister says so.' Here again we are back at the question of preaching a sermon which has relation to the lives of the children. The small boy will be bored with a vague discourse on the value of truth and truth-telling. He will take a very live

<sup>1</sup> Sturt and Oakden, *Matter and Method in Education*, p. 143.

interest in a concrete sermon dealing with the question of cheating in examinations in school, because it is a live issue with him.

This quality of concreteness can be obtained only if there is a definite aim before the preacher. This also is perhaps well-known but not so well practised. It applies to sermons for adults as well as to children's sermons. It is essential that the children's sermon should be on some definite point which is sufficiently circumscribed to be dealt with in the space of ten minutes or so. The aim should also be such that the preacher can so arrange his matter that a single clear impression is left on the minds of his hearers. Clarity is what the preacher must have if his sermon is to be effective. To attain clarity nothing is so effective as the formulation of a definite aim, drawn up and stated clearly in a few words. This is not only for the benefit of the preacher, but it is a good thing for the children to be told the aim of what is coming at the beginning of the sermon.

A text sometimes serves this purpose, but almost always, as well as giving the text, the preacher should state briefly and clearly what is the aim of his sermon. If this aim is well brought out, it will stay in the children's minds all through the sermon, and will help them greatly in following the exposition. Children, as a rule, do not like to be mystified in their work, and will be much more interested in a sermon if they can see where the preacher is going. It may also serve to keep the preacher to his point—a most important thing in a children's sermon—if he has publicly committed himself at the beginning of his sermon.

It may be taken as axiomatic that there should be illustrations in a children's sermon, just as in a sermon for adults. A great deal of the effectiveness, one is almost tempted to say *all* the effectiveness, of the sermon will depend on how the illustrations are used. By far the most common illustration in a children's sermon will be the short story or anecdote. There is, of course, nothing to prevent a preacher from taking objects, models or pictures, into the pulpit with him for use in his children's sermon. Especially in the case of a sermon intended primarily for the younger children, these things can be of great value, if rightly used. As a rule, however, it is the story which forms the main source of illustration, and the story is not always easy to use or easy to present.

With older children the illustrative story should be both short and pointed—and should have *one* point which it is the aim of the preacher to drive home. The Greatest of story-tellers, almost always (in spite of the efforts of many commentators since) had one point which His story was to illustrate and elucidate. No one, hearing the story, unless he were spiritually blinded, which our children are not, could miss that point. So with our story illustrations, in our sermons for older children, there must be definiteness and point which will enable our illustration to do its work. Padding and rambling and going into digressions, interesting though those digressions may be, will ruin the effect of our illustration.

This is in the case of older children. For younger ones, although there should still be the one main point in the illustration, there should be a more gradual working up to the climax. A certain lavish-

ness of detail and description, a repetition of dialogue or of description, is necessary. The small child does not like to reach the climax of a story and its conclusion too quickly; before, as it were, he is warmed up. The story may be spread in a way that would be tedious to older ones. But at the same time there must be one very definite point that the story has to make, and it must not be hidden in detail. There must be no doubt about the main point being made to stand out above everything else in the story.

It is absolutely necessary that the story told does really illustrate the point which the preacher is seeking to drive home. It is useless to drag in a story or an anecdote just for the sake of having a story in the sermon. The story will be remembered all right, but children are logical beings, and if the story is not apt or relevant they will be the first to see this, and the purpose of the preacher will be frustrated. We should never bring in an illustration simply because we think that there must be one in our sermon. It should come naturally and because it is needed. There is a well-known illustration of the irrelevant illustration given by Sir John Adams which has been often quoted, but which will bear quotation again. He says.<sup>1</sup>

'Take the following story intended to illustrate living faith. [The story is taken from a book called *Bible Object Lessons*.]

"At the battle of Waterloo, Nathan Meyer Rothschild was in a shot-proof tent, with a swift horse saddled and bridled by his side. At sunset he peered over the battle-field, and saw our soldiers sweeping the French before

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Adams, *Exposition and Illustration in Teaching*, p. 263.  
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them. 'Hurrah,' he cried, 'the house of Rothschild has won Waterloo'; his house had lent the money for it. He sprang into the saddle, galloped all night, reached the shore at daybreak, bribed a fisherman to take him across the stormy sea, and by whipping and spurring reached London thirty-six hours before anyone else. He used these hours in buying up all the stocks he could, and gained nearly two millions of pounds. Many on the battlefield besides him had perfect faith in the good news, but their faith was a thin lazy thing and did not rouse them to act at once. And so a faith that does not master and move you cannot make you rich in the goods of the soul. Real Christianity is a real living faith in a real living Saviour; it is a faith in a whole Saviour.'"

Now this story illustrates many things, but certainly not what the writer of the book from which it was taken meant it to do. It is not only irrelevant: its ethical implications are more than doubtful, and the questions it would raise in the minds of the children to whom it was told would altogether destroy any faint illustrative effect it might have. Why should Nathan Meyer Rothschild be in a shot-proof tent when presumably other people were not? A boy mind would certainly be inquiring whether there were any such thing as a shot-proof tent. I imagine this point might raise quite a lot of questioning. What would have happened if, as apparently the teller of the story thought they ought to have done, everybody had rushed away from the field of Waterloo to London to make money? These questions would certainly crop up in any intelligent audience of older children. The story would be worse than useless. It is perhaps an extreme example, and there is no difficulty in seeing the defects. But the danger it illustrates is a very real and a very common one.

Sometime ago I heard a speaker who was supposed to be explaining the benefits of education for our Christian boys and girls, use the story of the good Samaritan as an illustration on which to base a great deal of the discourse. The argument was that the kind action of the good Samaritan was the result of education, and the callousness of the Priest, and of the Levite was the result of the lack of it! It was a typical example of dragging in an illustration by the hair of its head. The speaker had a picture of the good Samaritan and the wounded man, and this picture had to be used somewhere, somehow; and used it was. It would have been far better to have left the picture at home. The subject was made to fit into the illustration and naturally suffered.

In cases like those given above there is no doubt that the moral would have to be pointed out, as no one would ever guess what it was, unless it were stated very definitely. But in the case of an illustrative story which fits well, is in its right place, and is told well, should the moral be pointed out? It seems to be a deep-rooted custom among our boys and girls to try and extract some sort of moral from every story they hear. Get a boy to write you a story and he seems to be quite unable to refrain from extracting a moral which is triumphantly given a place of honour by itself at the end. Sometimes it is as hardly come by as the use of education and the good Samaritan, but one can count on its inevitability. So the moral is expected of us when we tell a story. It must be admitted too, that we often feel that we ought to give it. We have not enough confidence in our story and in the way we have presented it, just to leave it to do

its own work. We must make sure that our young audience understand why we told the story, which is a reflection on the suitability of our illustration, or on our way of presenting it.

At the same time, although it is true that a story or illustration which really illustrates does not need the extraction of a formal moral at the end, it is also true that there is nothing disgraceful in bringing out the moral. It is a matter of psychology really. It is usually better psychology and better teaching method to let your audience find the moral for themselves. We need not be afraid, provided our illustration is a good one, that they will not do so. From the teaching point of view it is infinitely better for the child to arrive at the moral for himself and *feel that he is teaching himself*, than for him to have everything made plain and easy sailing for him. Do we not all react better to a lesson we have taught ourselves than to one which has been presented to us by others, especially in the realm of morals?

If the preacher feels that the moral of his illustration must be presented, then the place to do it is not in the favourite place at the end, but at the beginning. To quote Sir John Adams again:<sup>1</sup>

‘The moral may be insinuated with much less chance of opposition at the beginning or in the course of the story. The end is the fatal place, probably because the interest has naturally run down just at this point. The formality and inevitableness of the moral are also to be taken into account. It has all the unpleasantness of the bill that is presented after the feast is over.’

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Adams, *Exposition and Illustration in Teaching*, p. 264.

But, as has been said, if our illustrations are what they ought to be, there will be very little necessity for drawing the moral. They will speak for themselves. The following is an example of such an illustration.

'Solomon did many other clever things besides finding out who was the true mother of the living child. When the Queen of Sheba came to see him, she gave him a great many puzzling things to do, but he did them all and was never caught out once. One of her most cunning puzzles was to bring to him a dozen children all dressed exactly alike with their hair just the same length and combed in the same way. Some of them were boys and some girls; and the puzzle was for Solomon to say which were which. All he did was to order his servants to bring basins and make all the children wash their hands. When this was finished, he picked out those who had washed their hands only but not the wrists. "These," he said, "are the boys." And he was right.'<sup>1</sup>

Though not commonly done, there is no reason at all why a picture, or pictures, should not be used in connexion with the children's sermon, just as they are used in school or in Sunday school. There are, however, certain points which the preacher must watch if he is going to use pictures. In the first place the pictures, like his word illustrations must illustrate his point. They must be apposite, and the main feature of interest in the picture should be the part of the picture to which he wishes to draw attention. For instance, if, in the case of the Parable of the Sower, the intention is to draw attention to the birds eating the seed, it will defeat the preacher's purpose if the man who is sowing the seed, stands out prominently in the foreground of the picture.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 263.

He will get the attention and not the birds. It is not always easy to get pictures which satisfactorily illustrate points, but as far as possible the preacher should be careful that the picture will really help him and will not simply serve to divert attention from what he is trying to drive home.

Again, pictures should be graded, just like sermons. This again is not always easy to do. But there is no doubt that the same picture does not appeal with equal force to children of all ages. A small child likes a picture with bold detail and plenty of action related to things he knows. An older one will appreciate the picture that suggests a story, while the adolescent is beginning to appreciate beauty of form and nature. It goes without saying that pictures used must be big enough to be easily seen from any part of the church.

Another point to be watched is that the picture should not be suddenly sprung on the audience in the middle of the sermon or at the end. It should be hanging where it can be easily seen from the beginning, if not of the service, at least from the beginning of the children's sermon. The habit, which one sometimes comes across, even in Sunday school work, of bringing in the picture at the end is a mistake. If the picture is not produced till the end of the sermon, the latter lacks the interest and vividness which the picture would have given; it is not there to illustrate the particular point for which it is wanted when that point is reached, and, moreover, the children do not get a proper chance to see the picture. Small children especially like to have plenty of time to look at a picture. There should therefore be plenty of

time for the children to get familiar with the picture and to see it properly. If it can be left hanging in church or in Sunday school, where the children can examine it at their leisure afterwards if they want to, so much the better. But let the picture and the sermon become one in the children's minds.

A picture is more useful in a sermon meant for younger children though it can be used with effect with children of any age, and could indeed be used with advantage with adults at times. Care must be taken to see that the picture and the sermon agree. If there is any discrepancy between the preacher's story and the details as shown in the picture, be sure that the young, but critical, audience will notice it, and that it will detract their attention from the main issue. Particular care must be taken in this connexion with the kind of pictures of Jesus which are used. So many pictures of Jesus are apt to give a wrong impression of Our Lord, an impression too, which may be quite at variance with the impression we are trying to give with our words. Too much care cannot be given to this point.

Although it is often not easy to arrange for expression work in connexion with the children's sermon, it is a thing which is very necessary. The trouble with a great deal of our worship and a great many of our services is that the members of the congregation are passive recipients. Though passively receiving should have a place, it should be a place only, and should never occupy the whole stage as it frequently does. Especially is this true in the case of children. Their interest will not be maintained unless they have an opportunity for something more

than passively listening. The question then arises as to what can be done to supply the expressional side of the service.

In the case of the junior church or the children's service, where a great deal of the service is taken by the children themselves, and where the children go off into groups for discussion after the sermon, this need for expression has been largely met. At the same time, even here, it is usually only the older children who can get the benefit. Discussion groups are not of a great deal of value below the age of twelve or thereabouts. And we are still left with the problems of what a preacher can do in an ordinary service, of which the children's sermon is but one part.

It is admittedly a difficult problem. Most of the devices usually employed in school cannot be used because of the place and the presence of adults, and also because the children of the congregation are all of different ages and attainments. At the same time there are certain things which can be done which will help to make the children's sermon more effective than it sometimes proves to be.

In the first place the preacher may arrange to have his sermons reported by the children. That is, it may be made a regular thing for the children, when they get home, to write out a short summary of the children's sermon they have listened to that day. This summary need not be longer than a couple of short paragraphs. The summaries are then sent to the minister, or whoever gives the sermon, and he marks them and enters the marks on a chart kept somewhere on the wall in the church or vestry or

Sunday school. (Incidentally the same thing done with adult members of the congregation for the adults' sermon might be revealing to both congregation and minister.) The children would have to be divided into grades according to ages or attainments, and prizes could be given—if the Powers that Be believe in prizes—either to the best group or to all those gaining over a certain percentage of marks. This scheme, or any such scheme means, of course, more work for the minister. Also, it cannot be successful without the co-operation of the parents. But with that co-operation it can work well, and ensures that the children's sermon receives attention, even though it may not be intrinsically very interesting. Most important of all it gives the expressional side of the children's nature a chance to function.

Another scheme which may be used is for the minister, when giving his children's sermon, to speak on some definite subject, but to refrain from giving any text. The children may then be asked to find a suitable text for the sermon, and to send in their suggestions to the minister. They may be marked as suggested above.

Another excellent device, especially with younger children, and with a sermon which is mainly narrative is for the minister to ask the children to draw a picture or a series of pictures illustrating the sermon. These may also be marked if so desired and the best ones put up on view in some suitable place.

Very often in the sermon a problem of conduct may be suggested by the minister. Certain circumstances are imagined, and the children are asked to think over what they would do in such circum-

stances, and to write out the decisions to which they come, and their reasons. This would be for older children, though it could be done in an elementary way with younger ones also. It would be especially fruitful in the case of a junior church or a children's service, where discussion follows the sermon and where such problems can form the basis of discussion. Even if written out and handed to the minister they will probably give him some suggestions for future sermons. It is indeed, a very good plan for the minister occasionally to ask the children of the congregation to send him subjects on which they would like him to preach. He will probably get some surprises, but it will give him a very good idea of what problems and questions are being discussed and thought about by his youthful hearers.

Another method of expressional work is to ask the children to supply a story which would illustrate a particular sermon. This again would be for older children.

All these suggestions for expressional work depend largely for their success, as has been said, on the co-operation of the parents. It would be possible to have oral expressional work in the service itself, but this would be difficult and would not be good unless it were purely a children's service. But if parents can be persuaded to co-operate, and if the minister does not mind a little extra work, a great deal can be done along the lines suggested, and it will be found to be a great improvement on the usual plan of simply having children sit and listen.

Another important aspect of the children's sermon in this connexion is the way in which the sermon

suggests action to those who hear it. Anyone who has told stories to children will know they will act on the suggestions given in the stories, often acting out the whole story. A good children's sermon will be, in the same way, an inspiration to action and a source of action suggestion to the hearers, and in this way can be of the greatest help to them. It is perhaps not easy to keep tally of the expressional results of this, but the preacher who is dealing with normal children can be sure that if his material has been presented well, a stimulus to action has been given and his main object fulfilled.

There are four questions suggested by the Rev. E. L. King<sup>1</sup> which every preacher of a children's sermon should ask himself before he delivers his sermon.

1. Does this sermon seem likely to make children think?
2. Does this sermon seem likely to make children act?
3. Does this sermon seem likely to make children worship?
4. Does this sermon seem likely to make children solve problems?

Every sermon cannot do all these things. No sermon should do none of them.

<sup>1</sup> E. L. King, *The Charterhouse Programme of Religious Education*, p. 71.





## CHAPTER VIII

# COMMUNITY THINKING: THE GROUP-DISCUSSION METHOD

### I. THE VALUE OF THE METHOD

SOMEONE has described the method of education in vogue in most places as follows: The teacher takes a bit of information. He rolls it up into a neat and tidy lump. Then he throws it at the class. The class, or part of the class, try to catch it as best they can. Some pay no attention to it unless it hits them. Those who do try to catch it usually fail to catch it all, and keep only part of it. Then when the examination comes round, they are expected to throw it back again to the teacher.

It is not difficult to find fault with this method, and we are going to study a method by which we do not catch and throw back carefully-made lumps of information, but by which we ourselves can educate ourselves, find out things for ourselves, and come to decisions which shall be our own and by which our children can do the same. There are, to be sure, certain kinds of information which we must get from others or from books. But if we simply get such knowledge in order to keep it until an examination or some other test comes along, we are not really

educating ourselves, nor is what we have really knowledge. We need to use the information which we have gleaned before we can truly say that it is ours. We have to pass it through our own minds, test it, value it, and pass it on to others. Knowledge is only really ours when we have shared it.

Often we think that we understand a thing, and know a thing, until we are asked to explain it, or are asked to prove that it is true. Then we find that we do not really know it at all. This is one of the great values of discussion groups. They are places where we can say what we want to and can air our views. But they are also places where we find that it is not enough simply to use words without understanding what they really mean. They are places where we have to give reasons for what we say, and so they make us think and study for ourselves. But besides our own views and opinions, we hear the views and opinions of others. Sometimes we find our own opinions changing because of what we hear and because of the reasons that others bring forward. So discussion goes on until there comes out something different from what any member of the group thought when the discussion started. Thus progress is made in the world, and we advance in a way that we would not have been able to do by ourselves, or by just accepting everything that was told us.

### *Some Values of Group Thinking*

1. Group thinking gives every person a chance to share in decisions which affect the whole group.

In a group discussion one person does not impose his or her own opinion on everyone else. It is a

sharing of experience. It is not doing or thinking what someone else has decided beforehand that we must do or think. The result of sharing in the decision that is reached is that we have a great deal more enthusiasm for putting that decision into practice than we would have otherwise. *We* feel that it is *our* decision, but at the same time probably a better decision than we could have reached by ourselves. We feel like the man who came home from a prayer meeting and said to his wife, 'My, we had a wonderful meeting tonight. I took part three times.' It might have been quite an ordinary meeting, but for that man it was wonderful because he had taken part. The decision that we reach in a group discussion may not be a very revolutionary one, but we feel that it is ours, and that makes all the difference in the world.

## 2. Group thinking encourages and develops the habit of thinking for oneself.

When a subject is being discussed in a group, and we want to say something on it, we have to understand clearly what we are going to say, and we have to have a good reason for what we are putting forward. Other people may not agree with us and they will have their reasons, and possibly very good reasons. This causes us to examine critically what we have put forward. Perhaps our point of view will not hold water in the light of what has been said by others. We then have to review our position. Thus we are led to be critical of what we think and say. We get training in the art of self-examination, as well as in the habit of relating our ideas to the facts of experience. This is the way in which leaders are trained. This is the way in which men and women of inde-

pendent thought and judgement are produced, and these are the men and women which the world and the Christian Church needs so greatly today.

### 3. Group discussion trains us for group life.

Very little of our life is lived separately and away from all others. It is very necessary that we learn to 'live together'. In group discussions there are two courses open to us if we are to stay in the group. We have to give way to what the whole group thinks, or we have to win over the group to our way of thinking. On the part of everybody in the group there must be both giving way and gaining at the same time. We have the responsibility of making a positive and constructive contribution to the work, and we also have the duty of recognizing the right of others to their particular view-points and also the value of those view-points. We may not be convinced that they are right. We may feel the obligation to stick to our own view-point. But we must recognize the right of others to have a different opinion from our opinion. And very often, even though we may not recognize it at the time, the contact with an opinion different from our own has helped us and has enabled us to reach eventually a stage far in advance of the stage we were at before we took part in that discussion group. And in many, many cases the effect of the group discussion results in the advancement of every member of the group. 'Group thinking is like a chemical process in which the elements are modified and combined but not lost.'<sup>1</sup>

### 4. Group discussion is much superior to debate.

<sup>1</sup> H. S. Elliott, *The Process of Group Thinking*, p. 60.

When we take part in a debate, we usually try to force our opinions on others. We are out to win the argument irrespective of where the truth lies. If we know an argument which supports our opponent's side, we carefully ignore it. Sometimes we speak fervently on the side of a subject in which we do not believe. We are not wanting to find new wisdom for life's needs. We are simply concerned with making an impression. Speeches are often prepared beforehand so that there is no room for exchange of opinion. And where this is not the case, the whole mind is firmly closed against any danger of being affected by the real truth of what the other side is bringing forward. Debates are sometimes held on the most vital subjects, such as 'The Existence of God'. But the effect of such debates is bad. Quite often it is the wittiest speech which wins, and it would have been infinitely better for all concerned if the debate had never been held. The audience was not looking for truth but for entertainment.

The discussion method is not a debate with the audience voting on the result. Each member of the group contributes what he or she knows or feels on the subject, and so group feeling and thought are reached. By these means we are helped to solve the problems of life. The wisdom of all of us is made available for each of us.

#### *Places where the Discussion Method is very Valuable*

##### 1. In the home.

The discussion method is very valuable in the home. Children should have some share in the running of the home, especially when they are

growing up and can recognize the responsibilities connected with the home and the necessity for what is done. It is quite possible for parents and children to discuss common problems connected with the home and with the running of the home. As to how old children should be before this is attempted, that will depend on the children and on the parents. In normal cases there is no reason why simple matters should not be discussed with children from the age of seven or eight up. We should always try to let children understand why orders are given when we demand obedience from them. This is true of all children from quite an early age. This is not to say that everything must be dealt with by the discussion method. There are times when orders have to be given, and when they have to be obeyed. At the same time there is no reason why we should not always try to make our children understand the reasons for an order. (Sometimes we might find it rather difficult to supply a satisfactory reason.) And there are many cases, when there is no particular urgency, or when a principle of conduct is involved, when the discussion method can be profitably employed. It will not turn the home into a debating society as is the fear of some, but it will make for a much more harmonious working in the home, and will also result in a far superior type of obedience; the obedience that is the result of conviction, and not of fear, or the impression of the adult predominance.

A mother says to her small boy, 'Be good'. She has a definite idea in her mind as to what she means. She means that he is to keep away from the water, that he is not to tease his little sister, that he is to

leave the sweets alone, that he is not to run in front of motors that pass along the road. But is this also the meaning that the boy gets from her order? It is quite possible that his ideas on the subject are quite different. Therefore the mother should talk over the matter with him. It is not just one talk and then no more. But it is a process, so that gradually a common mind on the subject is built up. Quite possibly, if she is a reasonable being, some of the mother's ideas on the subject of being good will be modified. She will not be so horrified at the thought of his playing with water. And her boy will realize the reason for the things which his mother wishes him to do or not to do. So a happy relationship is built up, in which there is mutual regard, and where we do not have the soul-petrifying position of rules being made simply because we think we have to have rules, without regard for their real necessity.

By a discreet and careful use of the discussion method in this way, gradually increasing our reliance on it as the children grow up, we can do a great deal to train them in thinking for themselves, in enabling them to cultivate the readiness to give in to others, though not to themselves. The ideal of the Wolf Cubs is that the wolf cub gives in to the old wolf but not to himself.

2. The method is valuable in young people's societies.

In young people's societies this method helps us to get away from making long speeches, from preaching, and from talking without getting anywhere. When a leader is appointed, it is too often his fixed idea that he has to talk. He is to do everything while the rest

sit and listen and take it in. They sit all right, but after a while even sitting palls. If the discussion method is used, though the leader is still very necessary, everyone has a share in the work. A boy once announced that he liked his young people's society better than church because in the latter he could talk back to his leader. Probably church would be much more popular if in it we could 'talk back' to the minister. But even though it is not the usual thing to interject in the middle of the sermon, 'I don't believe that. Prove it', still ministers should welcome discussion afterwards, or in Christian Endeavour or other young people's societies. In such discussions far more satisfactory and far more permanent results would be reached than are possible from a 'straight' sermon.

This can be arranged as we have noted in the previous chapter in connexion with the Junior Church where the ordinary form of service is held, and the leader gives a short sermon. The service over, the congregation breaks up into age-groups for discussion of the problems raised by the sermon. If this is well organized nothing but good can come from it, both to the preacher and to the young congregation.

In our young people's societies we ought to be giving training in finding Christian solutions to different problems of life, national and personal. It is no use talking about what we will do in after-life. We are just as much concerned now when we are young as we ever will be, and we are far more enthusiastic. By the discussion method we can enable our young people to relate themselves definitely to what is going on in the world, and to see how their religion

can help them in solving these problems. In this way they can be led to think about subjects which, even in school, they are continually coming up against, and they can be led to relate their religion and the life of Jesus Christ to the whole of life, instead of isolating their religion in a water-tight compartment. 'But won't they get on to politics?' someone whispers. Certainly they will get on to politics. And why should they not? Could not politics do with being related a little more to religion than they are? There can be only one answer to that. If our religion is of any use, then it must be for the whole of life, and we must try to enable our young people to get accustomed to bringing all problems, even though they are the sacrosanct ones of politics, to the bar of the life and mind of Jesus. There is no better way of doing this than by the discussion method.

## II. WHAT GROUP THINKING INVOLVES

### *A Genuine Problem*

If we are going to have a discussion, we must have something to discuss. More than this, we must have something which needs discussion, that is, something for which it is important for us to find a solution. We must feel the need for a solution of this particular problem. Very often groups meet together and the leader decides that the discussion method will be used. He is grieved to find that it is a comparative failure. His group will not discuss. He cannot raise any real interest in the discussion. The same thing happens in school classes. The reason may be that the class or group simply does not feel any vital interest in the

problem under discussion. It does not touch their lives. It has no compelling attraction for them. Naturally under such circumstances, it will be very difficult to conduct a successful group discussion. Those same people who seem so lethargic will spark up surprisingly if you get on to a subject in which they are vitally interested. The leader then must first raise the interest of his group. The problems which he presents must be related to the lives of the members of his group. (We shall see later what this involves for the leader.)

A group may find itself in different circumstances. It may be in a position of mental or spiritual fog, which in itself constitutes a problem, and discussion may bring out some definite problem which was formerly veiled and blurred. Then this particular problem may be faced and thrashed out. There may be, on the other hand, some very definite question which is affecting the lives of some of the members of the group. This is a situation in which the discussion method may be used with great success. There may be no particular problem of immediate urgency, but there may have arisen from the reading of the group or from current events, the question of what would be the correct action under certain circumstances; which of several alternatives should be chosen, and how they could be put into action. If these can be related to the life of members of the group, so that they have more than a mere academic interest, then here too is a place where the problem is present and the discussion method may be profitably used.

*A Genuine Desire to Solve the Problem*

This naturally follows from what has been said about the feeling of urgency and interest. If we really 'feel' a problem then we are really anxious to 'find a solution for it. If the problem 'has a vital connexion with our lives then we are anxious to solve it.

*Real Thinking*

We are not just playing with the problem. We are not just indulging in mental gymnastics and showing off our cleverness in debate. This is not what we mean by the discussion method, and we will have no desire for such things if we are tackling a real life problem. As a group we are trying to find the true solution. There is no autocracy in the method. The group does not simply accept what the leader says, blindly trusting that he or she is right. There should be no forced solutions. Nor do we come together in the group to ask our leader to tell us what the solution is. If the leader is a wise and good leader, he or she will refuse to tell us what we ought to find out for ourselves. The solution is not to be a requested one. The solution is to be one which is arrived at by the united efforts of *all* in the group. Everyone must do their share in trying to find the solution, and everyone should have a share in the result. It is a co-operative effort, in which all have a chance to do their share in reaching the decision. The discussion method involves real effort on the part of every member of the group, and real thinking inspired by and guided by the group as a whole under the leader.

### *Real Knowledge*

We cannot help our group unless we have something to give. The discussion method does not mean the pooling of ignorance. It means the pooling of knowledge and ~~experience~~. If we simply rely on others in the group to bring knowledge while we rely on our opinions, then both we ourselves and our group will suffer. We owe it to the other members of the group, to the importance of the problem, and to ourselves, to do our best to make ourselves as well-informed on the subject as possible. It is our real knowledge that is needed, not simply our opinions and prejudices. Never let us forget that we are engaged on a search for truth, and not taking part in a debate. *All* the relevant facts are required, even if they run counter to some of our most cherished ideas and convictions. Only as we are prepared to bring forward *everything*, and to take *everything* into account, will we really get somewhere with our search and really share worthily in the co-operative effort we are making. The discussion method requires the scientist's devotion to truth, and the open-mindedness of the small child. Only as we have that open-mindedness will we enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

### *Considering and Weighing Alternative*

#### *Courses of Action*

Having collected our facts and pooled them, we have to consider them and, each helping the whole, consider which of the various alternatives is likely to prove the best solution of the question before the group. We have to bring those alternatives to the test of the highest standard of action we know, and

so be able to tell our fellow members the reasons for our being in favour of one alternative rather than of another. Gradually, the opinion of the group will begin to crystallize on one course of action.

### *Coming to a Decision*

Finally there must be a decision. This may be unanimous or it may not. There will usually be a majority in favour of a certain decision and that will be the decision of the group. But this does not mean to say that everyone in the group is to be coerced into accepting the majority decision or that any attempt is to be made to do so. The important thing is not unanimity. The important thing is that each member of the group, helped by all that has been brought forward in the group, and by the experience of the other members of the group, should come to a decision for himself, or herself. It may be that one member will come to one decision and another member to a totally different decision. That does not mean that the group and the discussion has been a failure. If it has enabled individuals to come to a real decision of their own, after having faced all the relevant facts and taken everything into consideration, then the group has been an unqualified success. Of course sometimes minority decisions are the result of contrariness. This is just another form of narrow-mindedness. No group can be successful as long as there is prejudice and narrow-mindedness in the souls of its members. If there is an honest desire for the truth, and an honest desire to follow where the truth leads, then the group will be successful. It must be emphasized again that in coming to a deci-

sion there must be no element of coercion. Each member must be free to reach his or her own decision, and each must have their opportunity of influencing the decision of the group.

### *Action in Accord with the Decision*

It is of the greatest importance that having come to a decision we act on it, either as a group, or as parties or as individuals. Better far that we do not come to a decision, than that having come to a decision we do not act on that decision. When the group has reached a decision as to what is the best solution of the problem it has been discussing, then the next step is to go out and test the theory in life. This is how we make progress. Our discussion method will be of no use to us if it does not result in action. If our problem has been one that is vitally connected with our lives then it will not be difficult to put our decision to the test.

### *A Further Discussion on the Results of our Action*

After members have tried out the solution arrived at in the group, and have had an experience of how it has worked in their lives, then they should meet again to compare notes and to discuss what they have found. There will quite probably be need for modification in the decision, as a result of the experience of members. Possibly there may have to be radical changes in what was decided. Possibly some of those who could not accept the group decision will have found that they were wrong. Possibly they will have been right. A further discussion will be of the greatest value, in helping all members of the group

to decide what is to be done next and what further steps are to be taken. Each member who has honestly tried to put into effect the decision reached will have had a new experience and thus the group will now be richer in knowledge and experience, and this discussion will be more fruitful. A teacher learns something about teaching. Then he starts to teach. He teaches for a couple of years. Then he goes for a course of training. His course of training now is much more valuable to him because of his teaching experience. So with our group. Our discussion in the light of what we have tried to do, will be of the greatest value to us.

Let us take a typical example of the discussion method and of how it works.

We have in India the question of untouchability. There was here a definite problem which affected everybody vitally. There was a genuine desire to solve it. It could not be solved by going to Government. It had to be solved by the people themselves. They had to do some real thinking about the matter and had to call in to their aid all the skill and knowledge they possessed. It was not just a debate. The life of Mahatma Gandhi depended on the result of their discussion group. So they used the information they had and came to a conclusion. They had to reach a conclusion if they were to achieve the object of their coming together. This done, they went out and tested their conclusion in the outside world. They then discovered some new information. Orthodox Hindus opposed the conclusion to which they had come. Here was a new fact which they had not taken into consideration, but which emerged as soon as they tried to act on the conclusion to which they had come.

So they had to start again. Either a new plan was to be made, or the opponents of the old plan were to be won over. So they had to begin discussing all over again.

We may think that very little good was done by this discussion; that it is no use reaching a conclusion if we have to scrap it shortly afterwards. But in twenty centuries the depressed classes have not had as much thought given to them as they have had during the last year. The whole work of Christian missions for the depressed classes has been brought out. The nation is no longer sleeping on the problem. So, even though a permanent conclusion was not reached, the discussion method was extremely valuable in educating the community, and the conclusion that was reached was a step forward. Thus in smaller matters too, the discussion method is of great educational value. By it we make gradual progress. Ideas gradually permeate society, and often valuable conclusions are reached which change the whole course of history.

One more point must be noticed. The discussion method *does not mean that a person is required to give up his or her convictions.* We may be required to prove our convictions. The method should make it impossible for us to hold blindly opinions which we fondly mistake to be convictions. We have the opportunity to learn whether what we believe is really true or not in the light of all the information and experience that can be brought to bear on it. But, when this is done and we have a real conviction, then no one wishes us to give up that conviction. We keep our conviction, and understand that others have

different convictions which they also wish to keep, and so we learn the great lesson of tolerance.

### III. LEADING GROUP THINKING

There are three possible courses of action which the leader of a group has before him.

1. He may use force; that is, the force of his personality, of his knowledge, of his position. He may impose a decision on the group. He may give orders and make the others follow. Needless to say this is not group thinking.

2. The leader may go to the other extreme, and let everyone do and say what is good in their own eyes. He may exercise no control whatever, and let the discussion degenerate into a free-for-all with everybody at a loose end, with the result that the group gets nowhere.

3. The leader may exercise a wise direction of the process without dictating the decision. He may guide without forcing. He may suggest without coercing. He may see to it that everyone makes his contribution and that the result is the result of everybody sharing and not of one or two forcing opinions on others.

The leader must remember that he is not the chief speaker in a debate in which the other members are not required to take part. One of the great difficulties in young people's societies is that so often the leader seems to think that it is expected that he should continually and constantly hold forth. He thinks that he must be always on his feet, and that he must do all the work. Leaders must remember that their chief job is to make others do the work, that

they are not in the pulpit, but in a group. The leader's work is to see that all share in what is going on in the group. In any group there will be those who are cleverer than others, and those who know more than others. The leader must see that due contribution is made by these members, but that they do not dominate the group. As far as possible, of course, the group should be composed of those of equal attainments and ability.

The leader's job is not to tell the group facts and conclusions. It is to lead them to find out facts and to come to conclusions for themselves; to teach them to think for themselves. He is there to guide and to help in difficulties, to share his knowledge and experience with the rest, and to bring out all that each member of the group has to contribute.

The one thing which the leader must avoid at all costs, no matter how much more experienced he may be than his group, and no matter how much more he may think he knows, is the forcing of his opinion on the group, and the stifling of the opinions of members of the group. O. N. Geer gives the following illustrations of the danger of this form of autocracy. 'Our minister always ends the discussion by telling us what we must think and do, and then nobody else will say anything. . . . Our minister objects to having us talk about such things as movies and good times because they aren't spiritual. . . . Our minister is afraid to have us discuss and say what we really think about things.'<sup>1</sup>

No leader of a discussion group should ever be afraid to let the members of his group say what they

<sup>1</sup> *The Epworth Herald*, 30 November 1929, article entitled 'Religion in the Process of Group Thinking'.

really think about things. It may not be pleasant at times, but if he does let them say what they *really* mean, he is on the high-road to accomplishing something really worth while.

It may happen that the group reaches a decision contrary to the opinion of the leader. Still do not try to force it to a decision which pleases you. You have a right as a member of the group to put forward your own opinion, and you have the right, if you feel it necessary, to dissent from the decision of the group. But leave it to practical experience to decide which is right. Possibly experience will prove that you were right and the group wrong. Possibly the result of experience will be that you find yourself to be wrong.

*Some Practical Suggestions for the  
Conduct of a Group*

1. Have your group seated so that everybody can see everybody else; that is, in a semicircle or in three sides of a rectangle. It makes a big difference if you can see the face of the person who is saying something. Also dispense with formality as much as you can. It is not necessary for everyone to stand up whenever he says anything.

2. Define the issue clearly. Have a definite problem and state it clearly. As has been said before, if you have no definite problem, then do not use the method.

3. Come to your group properly prepared. It is not necessary that you should know all about the subject to be discussed. It is not even necessary for you to be an expert in the subject. But it is necessary for you to have thought about the subject, to

have come to a conclusion as to what are the salient issues, and for you to have a general idea of the scope of the subject and about what is relevant. Otherwise it will be impossible for you to 'lead' the discussion in any useful way. A discussion group must be prepared for even more carefully than a set speech or sermon.

4. The leader should know his group. He should do his best to understand each member, to learn about his home, his temptations, his disposition, his hopes, his fears, the conditions under which he lives. The more the leader knows about the members of his group individually, the better will the group function, and the more likelihood there will be of the leader being able to lead them to true decisions which will be a mark of real progress in their spiritual life.

5. Hold your group to the main issues. Do not let them be side-tracked on to topics, which, however interesting, do not help towards the solution of the particular problem with which you are dealing. You will find a continual tendency to get off the point. This must be carefully watched. Make a mental note of topics which come up in this way, for they are evidently intrinsically interesting to your group and may be taken up later on.

6. Keep things moving by wise questions and suggestions. It is not always easy to ask 'wise' questions. Knowledge of how to ask questions will come with practice. Try to ask questions which will throw people back on themselves and their own experience, and which will make them think. It is always a good plan to ask a person to explain what he means by the terms he uses. It is astonishing how often we use terms

with a very foggy idea of what they really mean and stand for. It is a very valuable way of clearing issues, and of making a person really think what he or she is saying.

7. Do not let the members of your group make long speeches. It is a discussion, not a debate. What you want is the rapid interchange of thought and experience. Do not let the discussion be monopolized by any one or two people. Always insist on the ordinary rules of politeness being observed. Sometimes when people get very interested in a discussion, they are apt to interrupt and not to allow others to finish what they are saying. You must firmly discourage anything of that sort. Keep a firm control over what is going on. The rules of discussion were made for good reasons, and only good can come from observing them.

8. Insist on the practical. Try not to let your group lose itself in theory and philosophy, for which it will probably show a decided tendency. Bring all the issues down to everyday life, and never be afraid to give them a personal application. That is, try to get members to realize that what they are discussing has a personal application to each one of them. Refer things to the bar of their own experience, and to the bar of the experience of Jesus.

9. Do not be content to leave your subject until you have come to a decision. This should be either a decision of the whole group, if unanimity can be reached, or the decisions of minorities and individuals. *But reach decisions.*

10. Keep a record of proceedings and record all decisions reached. If there is not unanimity on any

question, record all the different decisions reached by small groups or by individuals, and get them to put down their reasons for dissent in the record book. One member should be appointed as secretary whose duty is to keep the record book written up.

11. Having come to a decision, then press for action. Do your very best to see to it that your group acts on what it has decided. As has been suggested, have further meetings if at all practicable, to discuss what the result of action has been. Before leaving the matter of coming to a decision, discuss ways and means by which the decision may be put into practice. Discuss difficulties which may arise and ways of overcoming them.

12. If you find that it is difficult to keep the discussion going along the lines on which it ought to go, every now and then summarize what has been said and point out the place that has been reached. This gives a fresh starting-point and consolidates what has been done. This summary need be only a few words, but it will enable you to keep things to the point and make progress more definite.

13. Never be discouraged. Have infinite patience. If you find that your group is not responding, it probably means that the members are not interested and that the question with which you are dealing is not connected with their lives; or at any rate they cannot see that it is in any way connected. Either show them how it is connected, or drop the subject. It is sometimes a good plan to let the group together make up the syllabus of work for the term or period of study. You will then have a better chance of getting subjects they are interested in. Do not be

afraid of any subject, no matter how far distant from 'religion' it may seem to be. It cannot be far away really. Another plan is to ask members to send in questions that have been troubling them or about which they have been thinking. From these a syllabus of subjects for discussion can be arranged which will certainly be interesting to the members of the group.

### *Group Discussion and Worship*

It is sometimes objected that the discussion method is not devotional. It is, however, quite wrong to contrast this method with 'devotional' meetings and methods as though there were a conflict. Our lives are not divided up into compartments in this way. It is very often a cause of our weakness that we do try to make compartments in our religious life. We cannot divide our religion up into separate divisions. In the discussion method we take a real problem and use all the spiritual power we have to solve it.

Men are trying to solve the problem of untouchability by political means. They should be using spiritual means. Untouchables are human beings for whom Jesus died. We come to the principle that every human soul is of value in the eyes of God, and with this principle permeating our discussion and thinking we solve the problem. So we bring religion and religious principles into life. So we bring every aspect of our religion to bear on our problems.

Very often the devotional meeting does not issue in action. Very often it is unbalanced and ill-guided. But if in the devotional meeting a problem is discussed, the spiritual power gained from the devotional

atmosphere helps us in deciding and solving, and in bringing about action.

There was an outstanding example of this in the Friends' Committee on European Relief during the war. There were thirty-five members of this committee. They spent millions of pounds. They never took a single vote, yet they never took a step without the unanimous consent of the committee. How did they do it? They did it because they believed that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is not something that has been, but is now lost, but on the contrary is a real factor in life today. 'Thus the rather tedious tasks of a committee were transformed into adventures in Christian living through group thinking.'<sup>1</sup>

So, too, we have the example of Pentecost. Here there was a real problem and a real need. All was dark and the future was uncertain. The Leader on whom they had been accustomed to depend was gone. There were many different opinions as to what should be done. The apostles realized that unless they came together they could not carry out the will of God. So they shared their ideas and feelings. They came to the point where although not of one opinion, they were of one spirit. Then the Spirit came. Then the Spirit was able to lead them. The Spirit became a member of their group.

So our discussion groups may have as a member the Spirit of God. If we make Him a member of our group, then we may be sure that we will reach right decisions and come to wise conclusions and get the power to carry out in action the decisions that have been reached.

<sup>1</sup> O. N. Geer, *op. cit.*

## CHAPTER IX

### SUGGESTION

THE phenomena of suggestion were first brought into prominence by the claims of hypnotists. It was found that certain suggestions made to a person in a state of hypnosis, were carried out when the subject had come out of the state and was again living his usual normal life. Even when it had been suggested to him that on waking or at some future date, he would perform some foolish or unreasonable act, he would carry out the suggestion and also rationalize it, attempting to find a reason for what he was doing. It was thus found by hypnotists that, when in the abnormal state of hypnotism, a person readily accepts certain suggestions made and acts on them.

It was afterwards realized that this phenomenon of suggestion, which appeared in an extreme form in the abnormal state, was also present in normal life, and played a big part in the development and activities of the life of the normal person. It was realized that we are continually, consciously and unconsciously, accepting suggestions and acting on them, even when there is no approach to any abnormal condition. In fact, whenever we accept as true something for which we can give no reasoned proof, we are the subjects of suggestion. Suggestion is defined by Dr. McDougall

thus: 'Suggestion is a process of communication resulting in the acceptance with conviction of the communicated proposition in the absence of logically adequate grounds for its acceptance.'<sup>1</sup>

There are various ways in which suggestion acts and various degrees of suggestibility, ranging from that of the person in a hypnotic trance to that evinced by the alert thinking person who has his own settled convictions and ideals, and tests all new ideas by those convictions and ideals. Suggestion may act consciously or unconsciously. That is, both the person making the suggestion and the person receiving it may be conscious or unconscious of the fact that suggestion is taking place. Often the strongest suggestion, or at least that which is most far-reaching in its results, is that of which both giver and receiver are unconscious.

In normal life there are two main sources of suggestion. We receive suggestions from people and from things. There is prestige suggestion and form suggestion. In the case of prestige suggestion there are two main divisions: herd suggestion and personal suggestion. Personal suggestion is that suggestion which comes to us from some one person who, for various reasons, has great influence over us. Form suggestion is the suggestion that comes to us from things, or because of the form in which ideas are presented to us. Sometimes it is difficult to tell whether a suggestion is one of form or of prestige. For example, an article in a paper may be the cause of suggestion purely on account of the way in which it is set out and written, or even simply because it is

<sup>1</sup> W. McDougall, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, p. 97.

printed matter. On the other hand the author of the article, if we know him or know of him, will have a great deal to do with its suggestive power. To a member of Congress an article by Mr. Gandhi will have much greater suggestive power than would the same article by Mr. Winston Churchill, supposing it were possible for those two gentlemen to write the same article. There are, however, some very definite suggestions which we receive, where the personal element is entirely absent or at any rate very remote. A room can give us an æsthetic suggestion and a church a spiritual one.

Prestige suggestion is sometimes the result of the influence of the herd. A great many of our social customs, as we know, are accepted simply because everyone acts according to them. The extravagant expenditure over marriages which is common to all communities in India is an example of this. It is not accepted because there are any reasonable grounds for the custom, but simply because everybody does it. A crowd of people are very suggestible on the emotional side. At the end of the war I once saw a crowd of soldiers on strike, surrounding the car of a colonel, vociferously giving vent to their grievances, the chief of which was that they were not being sent home and had no money. Things looked ugly until the colonel mentioned the name of the general in charge who was a popular officer. Five minutes later that colonel's hat was being passed round while a collection was being taken up to make a presentation to the popular general. In ordinary life the colonel was a university professor and he knew something of the power of suggestion with a crowd.

Emotion spreads in a crowd without any apparent reason, and often any one member of the crowd would be hard put to it to give any rational explanation of his conduct. We see suggestion working in this way in the hold that tradition and 'tone' have in a school. A boy or girl will not do a certain thing, not because he or she has reasoned out the rights and wrongs of the case, but simply because the suggestion of the herd in which he or she is living has been accepted.

In the same way we accept suggestions from those whom we conceive to be outstanding. The average church member accepts what his minister says without trying to think out for himself whether it is right or not. Many people accept the suggestions of the printed page because the printed page and authors have prestige. If we admire a person very much for some particular aspect of his life, we are apt to receive suggestions from him in other matters, besides that for which we admire him. Possession of great knowledge or power will always ensure acceptance of suggestions by those who are weak and ignorant. A teacher thus has a very great power of suggestion where his children are concerned, and the fact of his prestige renders the children very suggestible. In the case of those whom we regard as our equals the suggestion is rather a herd suggestion.

Suggestion also implies certain conditions in the subject. The closer the subject approaches to a state of hypnosis, the more suggestible he is. But even in normal life difference in circumstances, education and character will make big differences in suggestibility. According to Coué the best time to bring the power of suggestion into play is when the subject is drowsy,

just before dropping off to sleep or even when he is asleep. In the same way suggestion will be more powerful when the subject is fatigued and tired than when he is alert. On the same principle—that is, making use of a relative dissociation—Fox recommends making a casual suggestion when children are hard at work on some task which has nothing to do with the subject of the suggestion.

These are methods of deliberately making suggestions. Usually suggestion operates unconsciously. People in ordinary life, too, vary a great deal in point of view of suggestibility. Firstly ignorance or lack of conviction is liable to make us open to suggestion. If we know nothing about astronomy we accept the opinions of a man who apparently does; not so much perhaps because of his great knowledge as because of our great ignorance. Not only this, but we are inclined to accept suggestions from him on other subjects also where he may not have the same right to speak as he has in connexion with astronomy. Thus the dicta of scientists on the subject of religion carry far more weight with most people than they ought to. Many people, even Cabinet ministers, accept what army and navy experts say because of their ignorance on the matters dealt with by the experts. And often they allow themselves to be influenced by the expert in matters where the expert has no claim to special knowledge. This is really the other side of prestige influence.

Secondly, we are predisposed to certain suggestions. We accept a suggestion because we are ready for it. Binet did experiments with lines which first increased regularly in length, and then remained the same

length. He found that the great majority of those with whom he experimented were so under the influence of the expectation of a regular increase in length, that they found it when it was not there. We have the same experience sometimes when two trains going in opposite directions are stationary alongside each other. We are ready for our own to go, and if the other one goes first we have a strong suggestion that it is our own which is moving, when, in reality, it is the other train. We had the predisposition or expectation, and so the suggestion arose in accordance with that expectation. During the war we were predisposed to believe anything evil of our enemies and so accepted suggestions with regard to atrocities committed by them, at the same time rejecting any suggestions regarding our own atrocities, because there was no predisposition, but in fact a strong predisposition the other way. Expectation is an important factor in suggestion.

Thirdly, suggestion depends a great deal on the character and native qualities of the subject. Strong suggestibility is found where the instinct of submission is strong. On the other hand where the instinct of self-assertion or the instinct of pugnacity is strong there is not nearly so much chance of suggestion taking place, and in fact there may be contra-suggestibility. This is why, with some people, it is necessary to make them think that a certain idea was their own. If they think that it came from someone else they refuse to entertain it. Children in whom the two instincts we have mentioned are very strong are sometimes very contra-suggestive and have to be handled very carefully. Anything that is to be done by

suggestion in such cases can be done only through unconscious suggestion.

It is impossible, even if it were desirable, to escape from suggestion. The question sometimes arises as to whether it is right for parent or teacher to use the power of suggestion when dealing with children. The fact is that the use of this power is inevitable. The teacher or the parent cannot help himself. Suggestion is continually at work among the children themselves, and as the teacher is one of the class and of the school, and as the parent is one of the family, their suggestions also have their place. The business of those in positions of prestige is to see that they use their power of suggestion in the right way. Suggestion is not necessarily a foe to freedom. It is a tool which the teacher and the parent can use in helping their children to attain true freedom.

As well as being inevitable, suggestion is powerful. This has been demonstrated in the physical plane by Coué and his followers. It is also seen among native peoples. Maoris, active, strong, fit men, without any sign of illness, have been known to lie down and die purely as a result of the suggestion of the *tohunga* (native priest) that they would do so, because of an infringement of taboo. Suggestion is also powerful in the mental and moral realms. It has a powerful effect on the unconscious mind.

How then does suggestion work in the development of the intellectual life of the child and what is its place in his intellectual education?

We have seen the importance of prestige in connexion with suggestion and also the effect of the instinct of submission. Normally the teacher will

have the prestige, and the child in relation to the teacher will be submissive. This means that the conditions for great suggestibility are present. The teacher's superior knowledge will ensure that his ideas are accepted without question by the great majority of the children. The teacher will be able to suggest almost any ideas that he wishes to. It is just here that the danger lies. It is not ideas as such that the teacher should want to suggest. Rather he should be trying to build up a critical truth-seeking habit in his children. His aim should be, not so much to use his power of suggestion to fill up the minds of his children, as to use it in helping them to form mental habits in each of the subjects which he teaches. This is where suggestion is all-important in the intellectual development of the child.

It has been found by Binet that, because of the good suggestive conditions that exist in a class-room answers to questions can easily be suggested by the teacher, even though these answers are quite wrong. The teacher has to be on his guard lest he suggest answers rather than thought.

The power of suggestion is also important in the sphere of what has been called concomitant leanings. These are the attitudes towards school, education, culture, beauty, and particular subjects; habits of neatness and accuracy, and general standards of workmanship. The cultivation of taste in literature and art is very largely a matter of both form and prestige suggestion. The development of a love for some particular line of work is often the result of a suggestion emanating from the enthusiasm of a teacher for that work. Suggestion in these matters is

less deliberate, sometimes not deliberate at all, wholly unconscious on both sides, but none the less powerful because of that. The way in which a teacher faces his work, his intellectual alertness, his faithfulness, his enthusiasm, his methods, his love for his subject, all these will have their suggestive influence on his pupils and will have an important effect in the development of their mental life and in accomplishing the teacher's aim.

Suggestion again is of the greatest value in increasing and broadening the interests of children. If the teacher can use one subject as a 'suggestive basis' from which he is able to suggest other branches of study and inquiry, he will have done a great deal for his pupils. Under our present system with examinations and curricula which have to be strictly adhered to, this is perhaps difficult. But when greater freedom comes, the teacher will be able to make full use of the 'sidelines' that are suggested in the course of study, to make suggestions for wider study and reading and thought and thus broaden the cultural basis of the intellectual life of his pupils. Even under present conditions the suggestions should be made. Some pupils may have time to follow them up later on. In connexion with the subject of Scripture teaching this is a most valuable procedure which should always be kept in mind.

How does suggestion aid in the moral and religious development of children?

In moral development it is probably prestige suggestion which plays the biggest part. The herd variety of prestige suggestion plays a large part in the development of conscience. We see this in action in

the effect of the general atmosphere and traditions of home and school. Very often these traditions have a greater effect than any direct moral teaching of parents or teachers. In school these intangible influences are strongly suggestive. They are, of course, the creation of the different personalities which make up the staff and the school.

In early life, imitation, which is suggestion manifested in action, shows us how great is the suggestive power of those who have prestige. Small children imitate their elders. Parents and teachers have a great responsibility because of this. They have to be very careful that they set a good example that is worthy of imitation. Especially in the moral and religious realm does the child 'catch' its attitudes and modes of action from the teacher or parent. If we want our children to be reverent, we have to be reverent ourselves. If we want them to be unselfish and to be willing to serve, we have to be unselfish and willing to serve ourselves. The best way to get a group of boys to do some task which is unpleasant, is to show them how to do it by doing it ourselves.

In this connexion it is necessary to be very careful about the kind of heroes and heroines we present to children and adolescents. 'It is therefore necessary in schools to present worthy objects for the children to imitate. Stories of great men will often fire a child's imagination and make him try to resemble his hero, but it is well to select the heroes carefully, or at least, to choose from their doings those which we really wish to have imitated, otherwise there is danger that a false ideal may be formed.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sturt and Oakden, *Modern Psychology and Education*, p. 46.

Because of their prestige the teacher and the parent can have a very powerful suggestive influence in the moral development of their children, but the suggestion will be largely unconscious. The child, at any rate, will not be conscious of receiving the suggestion. The relationship between teacher and pupil and between parent and child is therefore of the greatest importance. This is another argument against anything in the shape of fear. The more friendly the relationship is, the greater will be the suggestive potentiality. Anything which tends to create a barrier between teacher or parent and child will militate against suggestion. If we wish our children to accept suggestions from us and to imitate us, we have to love them and cause them to love us. 'If we really love a person we generally try wittingly, or unwittingly, to be as like the beloved as possible. We long to share their experiences and their thoughts, to read the same books, to adopt their attitudes towards life. We grow to appreciate their tastes or try to make them share ours. Children learn rapidly from teachers they admire, friends acquire habits of thought and speech from each other, and married people, as the years go on, often grow curiously like each other in expression and even in features.'<sup>1</sup>

Suggestion is of great importance in the formation of sentiments. Here again it will be the teacher's own conscious and unconscious attitude to life ideals that will have suggestive force with his pupils. The tone of the school and of the home will also have a strong suggestive power in the matter of forming such a sentiment as a love of truth.

<sup>1</sup> Sturt and Oakden, *Modern Psychology and Education*, p. 45.

No teacher or parent can be too careful of the suggestions he makes to his children. The suggestive process is going on all the time and can be powerful for good or evil. The teacher who tells a boy that he is a lazy young good-for-nothing need not be surprised if the boy accepts the suggestion and acts up to the reputation given him. The parent who tells his child that he is a naughty boy is doing quite a lot to make him a naughty boy, and is not helping him in the slightest to be a good boy. When we tell a child not to be disobedient our suggestion is in the opposite direction from that in which we wish the child to go. We are suggesting disobedience instead of obedience. In the same way if a person is trying to conquer an evil habit, his thoughts should not be on the evil he is trying to get rid of, but on the positive good he is trying to accomplish. We should always be careful to see that our suggestions are helpful and positive. Otherwise what we say is really helping the evil to consolidate its hold. If we generalize on the subject of our children's misdeeds we are simply encouraging them to make the generalization come true. On the other hand a suggestion in the opposite direction will be equally effective. If we wish our children to become persevering and hard-working, it will help us along the road if we let them see that we expect them to work, and lead them to think of perseverance as the natural and expected thing, and the lack of it as abnormal.

These suggestions, as has been said before, depend on the relationship which exists between the teacher and the pupil and between the parent and the child. The more fear there is in the class-room or the home,

and the greater the distance between adult and child, the less will be the power of suggestion. The more the teacher becomes one of his class, one with them in the search for knowledge, the search for God, pooling his larger knowledge and experience with theirs, and creating confidence and trust, the greater will be his suggestive power. This is one reason why Christian girls' schools in India have usually been better schools than Christian boys' schools. The contact between teachers and taught is usually much closer in a girls' school. Fear is the great enemy of suggestion and will do nothing but set up contrasuggestibility which is to be avoided at all cost.

## CHAPTER X

### SELF-ASSERTION

THE instinct of self-assertion is a corrective to the herd instinct. The tendency of this instinct is to prevent people being content simply to be one of the herd, and to make them strive to develop an individuality and to be ahead of, and different from, others. Those in whom this instinct is strongly developed become the leaders of the herd. The emotions which are part and parcel of the instinct and its working are pride and ambition. These are the feelings which urge us to go ahead, to make a name for ourselves, to gain a position in the world, and generally to show in some way or other that we are different from, better than, and more to be admired than others.

The working of this instinct can be seen from the earliest years of life. The baby soon begins to try to assert itself and, as we say, shows that it has a will of its own. If it does not get what it wants, it cries, and soon learns that when it wants something that it hasn't got, it has only to cry in order to get it. It soon learns too that when its parents want it to do something that it does not want to do, if it cries it does not have to do it. All of which is, of course, very bad for the future of the child, but is only too common. A child soon learns to assert itself in various

ways, especially if its parents do not realize what they are doing, and allow it to get into the habit of imposing its will. The idea so prevalent, that a baby or small child must not on any account be allowed to cry, and that it must be given anything it wants rather than be allowed to cry, is responsible for a lot of the trouble that teachers and parents have later in life with this same child.

Naturally a certain amount of self-assertion in small children is a good thing, but there is a limit to all good things. Too often it is not realized what harm is being done to the personality of the child by allowing it to get its own way continually, and by thus allowing the self-assertive instinct to develop a strength which is dangerous to the ultimate well-being of the child. Bribing with food or caresses or money or anything else that will serve the purpose is responsible for a great many 'spoilt' and unmanageable children, and is the cause of great anxiety and grief to the parents as the child grows older, as well as of making it thoroughly obnoxious to all with whom it comes in contact.

As the baby grows into a small child this same self-assertive instinct can be seen at work in many ways. The child likes to make itself the centre of attraction and to draw attention to itself. If it cannot do this by fair means it will do it by foul. Sometimes it does it by quarrelling with other children, sometimes by refusing to eat its food. The latter is a common method adopted by the small child or even the baby. The only way to deal with such a situation is to see that the child learns as quickly as possible that the method it is using does not bring about the

desired result. If, when it refuses to eat its food, it is fussed over and given special food, allowed to eat whenever it wants to, instead of only at meal times, the child will find that by refusing its food it is getting the attention it wants. It will therefore persist in this course of action. If, on the other hand, it finds that it is not fussed over, that no one pays any attention to it when it does not eat, the law of satisfaction comes into force, and because the child gets no satisfaction from this course of action, it learns not to continue it.

It is, of course, equally bad to suppress, or to try to suppress, the child altogether and give it no chance for self-assertion and self-expression. There must be a happy mean, and we must strive to see that on the one hand the instinct does not so develop that it overshadows the rest of the personality, and on the other hand that a fair opportunity for a reasonable development is given, and that opportunities for self-assertion along the right lines are given.

As we come to older children we will find that in certain cases there are definite signs of capacity for leadership developing, and that the self-assertive instinct is, at the urge of pride and ambition, functioning in different directions in different cases. In every normal child there will be a healthy desire to assert himself, and the task of the teacher is to provide suitable opportunities for self-assertive activities, and also to take especial care with those in whom the instinct is strongly developed, and who are obviously becoming leaders. Again we have the task of sublimation.

In the case of older children, both in home and in

school, the instinct will be shown in different ways. The bully who is fond of using his physical strength on those weaker than himself is asserting himself in the only way he can. The pupil who is at the bottom of his class, but the hero of the football or hockey field, is asserting himself as best he can. The dud on the hockey field has his turn perhaps when the examination marks come out. He has asserted himself in another way. The older boy who is perhaps in a lower class in the school, and is therefore unable to gain a position among those of his own age because he is in a lower class, makes himself a leader among the younger boys of his class and, given half a chance, will lead them in revolt against the older pupils and make things generally unpleasant for them. The young man who has no distinguishing qualities of head or muscle, will make himself conspicuous by his wardrobe and the superiority of his *pugri*. The *sari* is also brought into the service of this instinct.

Sometimes displays of the functioning of this instinct annoy us and we are tempted to snub and suppress. Suppression and opposition, however, while they may curb external manifestations and surface symptoms, will never be of any use as far as real control or sublimation or building of character are concerned. The instinctive urge and the feelings that lie behind the manifestations we object to are perfectly legitimate. While we may recognize that many of the resultant activities are unworthy and harmful, we must also recognize that it is the natural right of everyone to assert and express himself in some way. It is one of the great faults of the present educational system that it does not give adequate

opportunities to everyone to assert and express himself. No school and no home can hope to develop personality and character or give a true religious education unless adequate opportunities are given in so-called secular subjects, as well as in definitely religious training, for self-assertion and self-expression.

Particularly is this true in the case of those in whom the instinct is strongly developed. In these cases the danger of going off into wrong channels is greater. Moreover these are they from whom our future leaders are to come. If their instinct is unduly curbed or not directed into right channels, then either we lose our leaders, a loss we can ill sustain in these days, or we get leaders whose ideals and leadership are unworthy and dangerous. The boy who asserts himself unpleasantly in school and is brow-beaten and cowed into outward submission, becomes your rebel. Who can say how many terrorists have not been driven into their misguided ways simply because some teacher or parent tried to cow one who was meant to be a leader and drove the instinctive tendencies into wrong channels. Teachers especially should remember that they are not put in positions of authority to impose their wills on their charges and to demand absolute submission. The self-assertive instinct is apt to cause teachers, who usually have it well developed, to do injury to the personalities of their charges.

There are various ways in which those who show signs of a capacity for leadership may be helped. Any scheme of self-government in a school provides many opportunities for those who have a strong self-assertive instinct to find useful channels for its activities.

The Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides are other means of providing such opportunities. Putting pupils in charge of libraries, of games material, in positions in teams such as captain and vice-captain—any of such things may be used in helping our future leaders to develop. Getting such pupils to referee matches and games is likewise an excellent thing. Organizations such as Christian Endeavour societies with their different committees and spheres of work, provide excellent opportunities also.

The necessity for providing opportunities for self-assertion is one of the reasons why in all the newer methods and philosophies of education so much stress is laid on providing opportunities for the pupils to do things for themselves. The same necessity applies to the purely religious side of education. Passivity without activity is utterly useless. The reason why so many grow up with no real religious experience is just because they have been accustomed all their lives to listening to people telling them *about* religion. They have never acted it and lived it for themselves. They have had no opportunity for self-expression in their religious life, and so accustomed do they become to this passivity in religion that they lose all desire for any self-expression or action. This should be a normal desire in everyone. We should never teach a lesson, or at any rate a series of lessons, without doing our best to see that it results in action and expression of some sort. Jesus taught us this when He told the parable of the house built on the sand, and the house built on the rock.

In our religious education then, the most important task we have before us is to see to it that our

charges have a chance to follow their natural instinct and express themselves. If expressive action of some sort does not follow religious teaching, it would be better if the teaching were not given. We have already seen how emotion felt, but not given expression to in action, is fatal to the growth of the personality.<sup>1</sup> Yet in a great deal of our religious teaching work this is exactly what happens. We pump in and pump in, but make no arrangement for an outlet. We find passivity, receiving, listening, intellectual agreement, but little activity, little giving out, little experimenting, little knowledge gained from experience.

In order to meet this need in our education, how are we to approach the matter of teaching religion? Are there any special methods which we can use which will enable us to give opportunities for the instinct we are studying to function along useful lines?

In the case of adolescents, and probably also in the case of ten to twelve-year-olds, the best method of approach is the problem approach. That is, instead of starting from the side of carefully prepared information, we start from the side of the pupil and his life-needs. The pupil has a difficulty in his life, a problem of conduct or conscience which he cannot solve, a need in his development which he feels. This should be our starting-point, because then it can also be our finishing-point. There is an epidemic in the village. Here is a definite problem. What help does religion give us in connexion with it? Has the Bible anything to say about health? What did Jesus

<sup>1</sup> P. 46.

do in similar cases? What would He do if He were in our village? What can we do? Let us go and do it.

In some of the homes from which our boys come the parents secretly worship idols. The boys are worried about it. Here is a difficulty. It forms our starting-point. We go into the question of why people worship idols. What good do they get from it? How could their need be met? Are there any cases of how that need was met in the Bible? Can we bring it to the standard of Jesus? Now let us decide what we are going to do. Let us go and do it.

This is practical religion. This was the method of Jesus. A problem was raised: Who is my neighbour? Jesus told how one man solved the problem; the good Samaritan. 'Go thou and do likewise.' A problem was raised: 'What must I do to inherit eternal life?' An analysis of the need and the weakness follows. 'Yet lackest thou one thing.' Then a definite action is indicated which would solve the problem. 'Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, . . . and come, follow me.' He could not follow Jesus by simply listening to the teaching. He had to act and sublimate his self-assertive instinct in the way indicated by Jesus. Thus would he become fit for the kingdom of Heaven. But this was a new type of religious teaching to the rich young ruler, to which he was not accustomed, so he went away sorrowfully.

The problem approach to our religious teaching then, will ensure that we are linking up with life-needs in those whom we are teaching, and will naturally open up channels of self-expression. It is here that one of the great values of the project

method lies, as we have indicated in Chapter III. The carrying out of a project means that a need is being met and that it is being met, not theoretically, but practically, with plenty of opportunity for self-assertion and self-expression. Our problem method of approach is really the project method of dealing with situations.

There are other ways in which we may provide channels along which the self-assertive instinct may function, and which will enable us to give those opportunities for self-expression which every child needs. One of these is dramatics and we will deal with the place of dramatics in religious education in the next chapter. Other means are drawing and writing. These are used extensively in connexion with ordinary school subjects. They can be equally valuable in Sunday school, day school Scripture class, boarding school Scripture work, or in connexion with the work of any other organization for religious education. Most young children like to draw, and it is probably due to lack of encouragement in our early days that more of us are not able to use this method of self-expression. In the earlier stages all the activities connected with the sand-tray are, of course, valuable, as well as modelling, colouring pictures, and so on. A good deal of attention is paid to this department of religious teaching.

It is usually as we come to deal with older children and adolescents that we find the expressive side so neglected. Why is it, for instance, that we do not see the value of writing and magazine work in connexion with our Scripture classes and work? We use this method in connexion with the teaching of English and

of the mother tongue. We have no doubt of its value there. A magazine for the Scripture class, whether in day school or in hostel, could be of the greatest value and would provide splendid opportunities for self-expression. If there is a class magazine already in existence, it is much better to use that than to start a separate magazine for purely religious subjects. This would only emphasize that unreal division between religion and everyday life which we should be striving to wipe out. But there is no reason why the work done in the Scripture class should not make itself directly felt in the class or school magazine. If such magazines are not in existence, then there is a grand opportunity for their commencement and continuance to be a definitely religious activity.

In rural schools there is usually no difficulty in finding avenues for self-assertion in connexion with village uplift work. In all schools, wherever situated, there are usually opportunities for social work of different descriptions. Such organizations as the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides in this matter also give invaluable training in religious education. In this connexion it must be remembered that Scouting and Guiding are not simply another school period. If they are conducted in this way they lose a great deal of their value and most of their interest. There should be a freedom and opportunity for activity and self-expression which is not usually found in the class-room, while the leader sheds all the teacherish atmosphere and is a big brother or a big sister. That, of course, is what the ideal teacher should be all the time, but few of us reach that standard and I am writing of things as they are. The Boy Scouts and

the Girl Guides should be organizations which supply those opportunities for congenial activity which are so lacking in most of our schools at present, and the foundation on which the organizations rest is an essentially Christian one.

An organization such as a Christian Endeavour society supplies many opportunities for a wholesome functioning of the instinct of self-assertion. In the Christian Endeavour society with its arrangements whereby every member can take some active part in the work of the society and where emphasis is laid, especially in senior societies, on positions of responsibility being filled by boys and girls themselves, we have an organization which is peculiarly well fitted to the needs of adolescents.

There are always opportunities for self-expression in connexion with the Church and church work of which the religious educator may take advantage. One which is of particular value in this connexion is the Junior Church. Here we have a service conducted, except for the address, by the children themselves. The conduct of the service, the readings, the prayers, and all the arrangements are in the hands of the children. It is their own service and obviously gives excellent opportunities for the useful functioning of the instinct under discussion. Sometimes the plan of dividing up into classes or discussion groups after the address is adopted, the subject of the address and the points raised in it forming the subject of discussion. This is an excellent plan with adolescents and has also been successfully carried out with children of ages from nine to twelve. It necessitates the presence of leaders for each group to guide the discussion.

Dr. Overstreet says, 'I know of one congregation, however, which regularly foregathered after the service for a half-hour's discussion of the sermon. The minister was always present and keenly joined in. He acknowledged that it was one of the most enlivening experiences in his whole ministry. He was enabled, in short to become an intercreating mind.'<sup>1</sup>

But even if the discussion group development is not adopted, the children's service conducted and arranged by themselves is well worth giving a trial. It is an extension of the principles we have been discussing into the sphere of worship, and their application is needed here just as much as in any other department of religious education. Our worship and the forms of worship to which we train our children are very often far too passive. We sit, but do not actively take part. Any method which will enable us to accustom our children to taking an active share in worship will be of the greatest value.

It is not enough simply to provide outlets for the activity of the instinct of self-assertion. We have also to sublimate its working. In what directions can this be done? We have already suggested how leaders can be developed, and this is the most natural line of sublimation. Let us give every opportunity to those in whom we find this instinct strongly developed, to take the lead and to learn the responsibilities that go with leadership.

A second line of sublimation will be in connexion with the field in which leadership is to be shown. It is not enough to be a leader. One should be a leader

<sup>1</sup> H. A. Overstreet, *About Ourselves*, p. 269.

in a worthy cause. In nothing is the strong exercise of self-assertion called for so much as in the fight against old-established evil custom, against conservative social customs, and against the dead hand of the past, all of which are so heavily entrenched in the villages of India. It requires strong self-assertion to break away from social custom and strike out on a new line for oneself. Here, then, is the field for our growing youth and the chance for those who like to take the lead. Our task in the case of those who assert themselves unpleasantly is to bring them into contact with the task as we see it, to seek to give them the vision of what their villages could be, to put before them the challenge of the conservative herd, and to guide them so that they will consciously use their powers in this worthy way. We will see later how the instinct of pugnacity can also be sublimated into usefulness in the same cause.

Again the instinct of self-assertion can be sublimated in the cause of truth and righteousness. The charge is frequently brought against missionaries that they are too self-assertive. This indeed is what one would naturally expect to find in the case of those who feel impelled to answer the missionary call. The work is such that it appeals to one in whom the self-assertive instinct is powerful. In the case of the missionary his self-assertion has been sublimated into the service of the proclamation of the gospel and the proclamation of the truth as he sees it. This is not to say that further sublimation is not needed nor that uncontrolled self-assertion is a good thing in a missionary or anyone else. The consecrated power from this instinct, however, is very often one of

the chief moving factors in the missionary's life. Now this need not be confined to missionaries. The impulse to stand for the truth one knows and to proclaim it at all costs is a legitimate result of the sublimation of this instinct in anyone. From among our children and pupils are to come the future leaders of the Church and from this instinct will come much of their power. Fired by the necessity of the truth of God for mankind, by the need and difficulties of those around them, by the knowledge that God has given them a message, this instinct to assert themselves is brought into the service of this vision and consecrated to its fulfilment. Again our task is to present the vision and the need; to guide the thoughts and ideas; to present the challenge, so that the self-assertive instinct may be sublimated into the missionary spirit in all our leaders.

Today, as never before, we need prophets. We cannot have a prophet without self-assertion. But it is a sublimated self-assertion, sublimated to the service of God and his truth. The actual activity will be one of service and meekness as well as of giving a clarion message. We must rid our minds of the idea that self-assertion means riding roughshod over others, claiming first position for ourselves and generally imposing ourselves on others. This is a crude unsublimated form of the instinctive activity. Our task is to train our children so that they escape from this unsublimated force and realize themselves in the service of their God and of their fellow-men.

## CHAPTER XI

### DRAMATICS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

CALDWELL COOK quotes a wag as saying that genius is an infinite capacity for making other people take pains. He then goes on to say, 'This is essentially the genius of the playmaster. The boy *takes* pains because his interests have been considered first. When the subject of study is given first consideration the boy finds the pains thrust upon him, often not unaccompanied by penalties.'<sup>1</sup>

This regard for a pupil's interest is fundamental in all education and certainly in religious education. Because of this, dramatics has a special claim on our attention. Plays are certainly among the commonest of children's interests, as well as among those of adults, and a judicious use of dramatics can be of the greatest value as well as of the greatest interest, to those whom we are trying to educate. This holds in ordinary school work, and also in specifically religious work. Especially is it true in India and in the Indian village. Dramatics can be one of our greatest allies in our religious educational work, whether with children or adults.

<sup>1</sup> H. Caldwell Cook, *The Play Way*, p. 45.

A child naturally turns to 'let's pretend'. If you tell a small boy or girl a gripping story, which, suitable to their environment, deals with things which come within their experience, you will quite often find them 'playing' the story afterwards, without any outside suggestion having been given. How many of children's games are not 'make believe' ones, and how often do we not find them 'acting'? They put into practice a natural desire to experience for themselves what they have heard, read about, or seen, and this, just like the play of animals, has an important biological and psychological function in preparing them for the life that is to come. The kitten plays with the fluttering leaf, pouncing on it and seizing it, thus preparing itself for its future warfare with the rat and the mouse. The small girl puts her dolls to bed, nurses them, dresses them, and generally mothers them. She, too, is preparing for later life and is doing it through play and acting.

'Dramatization has as its purpose the growth or development of the child, and not the presentation of dramatic material in one of its numerous forms for an audience. Children are given parts in a dramatization, not because they are fitted to play the part well, but because the playing of the part will be an aid in some phase of their development. Children through dramatization should never be exploited for the amusement of an adult audience.'<sup>1</sup>

The last sentence is important. With children the main thing is not so much the production of a finished play which is to delight an audience. It is the actual

<sup>1</sup> E. Edland, *Children's Dramatizations*, p. 4.

preparation of the play or playlet, the making up of the speeches and songs, the arrangement of the caste, the making or contriving of the customs and stage properties, the rehearsals and the co-operation. The finished production is perhaps the least important part. Yet how often it is on the finished product that we set our eyes and all our attention. It looms far too largely on the horizon, and we miss the opportunities that the preparatory spade work offers. It is true, of course, that the showing of the play is the goal before us, and that we must use that goal to make sure that the children's best goes into what is done. But the emphasis, either in the mind of the teacher or of the children, should not be on the showing of the play in public. Such emphasis will take the joy out of the preparation and the striving, and that, after all, for children just as for adults, is the true joy.

With small children in fact, it is not wise to have much public display. Their natural interest is in the preparation, and while it is probably better that there should be an audience, it is better to have, as a rule, an audience of more or less the same age as the actors themselves. It is bad for children to get into the habit of thinking that they must perform to adults, and that to do so is the reason for their preparing a play. If we allow that notion to creep in, we are in danger of losing most of the educational value of what we are doing. There is no need to worry about the audience. The spontaneous interest of the children will be quite sufficient without their thoughts being continually directed to people who are to watch their play.

Naturally plays for the small ones will be simple and need not be elaborate with regard to staging and so on. The small child has a wonderful power of imagination, and a chair can be an engine, a chariot, a boat, a camel, a horse, or a hut with equal facility. A start should be made from stories. In fact, a child will make his own beginning if he is given a story which easily lends itself to dramatization. Some of the parables of Jesus form excellent material for small playlets which can be worked up by the children themselves, with guidance or help from the teacher or leader. The story of the labourers and the vineyard, that of the two houses, and the prodigal son are examples of parables which lend themselves well to dramatization. The life of Joseph is full of dramatic incidents which can easily be worked up, and so is the life of Paul. Æsop's fables are a regular mine for short playlets for small children.

When choosing a story with the idea of getting the children to dramatize it, care should be taken to see that it is a story with definite clear-cut action, that it has positive, definite value, that it teaches a good lesson, and above all, that it is a story suited for the age of those who are to hear it and dramatize it. So many of the stories in the Bible are for adults. So many are told for adults and need modifying for small children. Either such stories must be left alone, or must be modified, if that can be done. But there are plenty of stories which can be used. It is a matter of knowing one's children and selecting carefully. The story and therefore the play should be such that it will have some relation to the experience of the children who are to work with it, so that the result of

their playing may be a definite enrichment of their religious life, and a definite urge to action in the right direction in their everyday life. That is, the play and the preparation of the play should help in the development of the child. It cannot do this if the thought is above the heads of those who are trying to express it.

The teacher or leader should allow the play to take shape according to the ideas of the children, not according to his own pre-conceived notions of how it ought to be done. If he thinks that his charges are going off the track he can guide them, and give them suggestions and advice. But he should keep as light a guiding hand on the reins as possible. The young players will, in many cases, be able to find out for themselves what is wrong. The main thing, as I have said, is not the finished play, but the children. The teacher or leader is there simply as a senior partner, and the less he has to bring himself into the picture, the better it will be.

At the same time this is not to say that the teacher or leader does not need to bother his head about what is going on. He should be taking as keen an interest as the youngest player. It goes without saying that he will be asked for advice and help. The form that his advice should take, however, is not to prepare things for the actors, but to help them to prepare things for themselves. If he works habitually on this principle, not only in connexion with dramatics, but in all his dealings with his children, they will soon learn to rely on themselves. But this does not absolve the teacher from knowing what he is doing. If we wish our children to get the best out of their dramatics, then we must know about the

theory and practice of the subject ourselves. The better the teacher equips himself, the more the children will get out of it. He cannot simply set his children to get up a play and expect them to get all they should out of it, unless he himself has travelled over the ground before, and knows where guidance is likely to be necessary, and what the guidance should be when it is asked for; unless he knows the dangers as well as the advantages of what he is doing. In dramatics, as in any other department of religious education, efficiency cannot be expected to drop from the clouds. The teacher or leader should be ready to put in careful preparation. Theory he can get from any number of excellent books. For practice, as long as he can gather a few children round him, he has plenty of opportunity.

I have said that children should be encouraged to make up their own plays. This is a general rule. But now and then it is well for them to be given a play ready written and carefully prepared, adapted to their age and suitable for their needs. Such plays, occasionally done, serve as a standard and a corrective for children in preparing their own representations. Such plays may be prepared by the teacher or pastor if he feels able to do so (and if so prepared, will usually be more suitable for the children who are to work it up, since the author of the play knows his actors). There are books of plays available in English, which would suggest subjects and methods even if the actual plays could not be used.

If with the guidance which can be obtained from such books the teacher is willing to experiment with his children, he will soon find that the Bible is

becoming a new book to them. The Bible stories, which with some children may have become hackneyed and stale, will take on a new freshness and meaning. The study of the stories will have an increasingly powerful influence both on his charges and on himself.

### *Dangers in the Use of Dramatics*

In connexion with the use of dramatics in religious education there are certain dangers against which we have to guard. Like most good things it can be overdone, especially by some boys and girls, and a discriminating use must be made of dramatics. It is not a good thing for the desire to act, and especially to act before an audience, to get too strong a hold on a boy or girl. The instinct of self-assertion must not be allowed to overshadow all other instincts, or to imperil the harmonious balance of the personality. As we have seen, it is natural for children to act and to make believe, but there is a stage when it passes beyond natural make-believe and begins to be artificial and professional. When signs of this appear, it is time for the line to be drawn.

There is, in fact, a danger latent in all acting and dramatics against which we must carefully guard. Acting is often an escape from reality; the means whereby a sometimes sordid and most unpleasant and uninspiring world is left behind, and new vistas of a fairyland of make-believe are opened up. The actor or actress escapes for the time being from unpleasant reality into play and the world of play. There is no objection to this in the case of children as long as it does not become a habit, and as long as it does not lead the child continually to attempt to escape from

unpleasant reality instead of facing it. Life must be faced, and no child can build up a strong and Christ-like character by being encouraged to run away from the difficulties of life.

It is not often that children get so much dramatics that there is a general danger of this. There are, however, quite likely to be individual cases where there is a distinct danger of such projection becoming the child's normal reaction to a world which, consciously or unconsciously, it regards as hard and difficult. Such a boy or girl may be prepared to put in a great deal of hard work at his or her dramatic escape; hard work, which, if applied in the right direction, would carry the individual a long way through the difficulties that threaten. Those in charge of dramatics for children have to watch individuals very closely, and have to be ready to curb any such projectional tendencies. Otherwise their efforts will simply produce men and women who will never face up to life and its problems.

There is another danger in dramatics because of which some people are inclined to discourage its use in education altogether. This is the danger of actors and actresses living their parts so vividly and successfully that they are not themselves. They are so many characters that they are no one definite character, and run the risk of having no definite personality of their own. It must be admitted that in the case of professional actors and actresses there is a very grave danger of this dissipation of personality. There have been actresses who have given up their work to save their souls. In so far as our use of dramatics in religious education, as in any education,

is allowed to approach the professional, in that measure will this danger be present.

It is not a danger that need be feared, however, as long as we are careful not to overdo our use of dramatics, and take care to see that whatever plays are prepared and performed are kept simple and natural, and that no professional element is allowed to creep in. Again those in charge must watch their young players and act swiftly on the first signs of any such development. As a rule there is practically no such danger with smaller children, and very little with older ones if the use of dramatics is not overdone.

There is no doubt at all that with all children the character that they act is bound to have an effect on them. Other things being equal, the effect of a good character will be good and the effect of a bad character will not be good on the one who is playing the part. But it is also certain that as a rule we cannot have none but good characters in our plays. If we are doing Bible stories it will sometimes be possible to have only good characters but often it will be impossible to avoid the presence of the villain or villains. Here again the one in charge must know his players, and generally, while naturally trying to cast his players suitably, will assign parts whose effect is not likely to be uplifting to those who are strong enough to resist any influence the part might have. In the second place, the supervisor will see that the heroic and ennobling parts are not always played by the same persons. He will see that, keeping in mind the first precaution, namely the relative strengths of character of the players, they are assigned to different types of roles at different times.

There would be a very real danger if one boy were allowed to play the part of villain in play after play. It is very noticeable how a humorist who, by reason of his humorous powers is always selected for the clownish roles, tends to live up to his habitual role in ordinary life when off the stage.

It is possible of course to have many Bible plays where the part of villain is absent, or if not altogether absent, can be made of little importance. The more this can be done the better it will be.

A question which will arise in connexion with parts and roles in dramatics in religious education is whether the part of Jesus should be taken by anyone or not. There is a fairly strong difference of opinion with regard to this, and it offends the feelings of many to have the part of Jesus played by anyone. In many cases it is possible to have New Testament plays without having Christ actually represented on the stage, a voice supplying what is needed for the dramatic continuity. This device is widely used. At the same time it is but a compromise, and there is really no difference between having a person hidden from view speaking his part, and having that same person coming openly on the stage and playing the part. If what has been said about the influence of the part on those who play the part is correct, the effect of taking the part of Jesus should be of the best. My experience has been that when the part of Jesus is taken by a boy who understands what he is doing, there is nothing irreverent in it, and that the effect is good. Careful supervision is needed, to be sure, but there is no doubt that the general level of a Bible play in which Jesus appears is at once raised very considerably. It

is naturally a matter on which there will be different views, but it is possible to do it with great benefit.

### *The Use of Dramatics in Worship*

Can dramatics be of any use to the pastor in connexion with his ordinary weekly services, and especially with his young people's services? Can it assist him in bringing about a true spirit of worship in his congregation? Can it help him and his congregation, young and old, to enter more fully into communion with our Heavenly Father, which is the object of all true worship? Can it make the things of the spirit more real and satisfying to the worshipper than they are made through the agency of the ordinary services?

If we can answer 'Yes' to all or any of these questions, then surely we are under an obligation to make use of this method of improving our worship. Even if we cannot answer with a definite 'Yes', we must admit that there is here a field for experiment which promises to be very fruitful. It is something with which it is possible for each pastor and each teacher, and each congregation to make experiments for themselves, going just as cautiously and just as slowly and just as far as they like. Different congregations are working under different conditions and have different needs. Each can find out for itself whether dramatics can be of any use to it in its worship or not.

This is not a new field nor an unknown thing. In some churches, especially in America, dramatics has been extensively and successfully used. In some cases the evening service has not been the service as we are

accustomed to it, but has taken the form of a religious play. Those who have introduced and organized this form of worship are quite satisfied as to its value. It has passed the stage of experimentation, and has become an accepted method of worship. That is not to say that it is a method which is used Sunday after Sunday, but certainly at regular intervals, and perhaps more particularly on special occasions and festivals.

It is probably correct to say that in every nation and tribe, civilized or uncivilized, cultured or savage, religious ceremonies in their early stages of development were closely associated with dramatic expression. In every nation the drama had its real origin in religion. Greek drama was closely connected with the religious rites and ceremonies of the people. It began with the custom of offering thanks to the gods by hymns and dancing. It was always produced as a part of religious worship and ceremony. It was staged in a sacred locality with an altar at the centre of the theatre. It grew up and developed round the religion of the nation. The same function of dramatics in connexion with religious worship can be seen in the ceremonies of any savage tribe, and especially in particular cases such as initiation ceremonies. So in our own Church history modern drama began in the festival services of the medieval Church with the choir-boys and priests as actors.

As a matter of fact then, in thus attempting to make dramatics an ally in our worship, we are going back to the time when the drama was the close ally of the Church, before it broke away from the religion which inspired it, and became a thing apart, with no Church control and no religious connexions. For several

centuries, for no reason at all, the Church has allowed this valuable medium of expression and impression to be divorced from herself. Unpleasant moral and commercial connexions have attached themselves to what was originally the child and ally of religion. There is no reason why the Church should not again claim what is her own, or why, purified and cleansed, the drama should not be brought into play once more as an expression of true religious feeling and true religious life.

The drama, the child of religion and the servant of religion, is not, of course, to be confused in any way with the theatre. The theatre is a means of bringing the work of a dramatist before the public. It is a commercialized business, not concerned with religious values or effect, but only, as a general rule, with providing the public with what they will pay to see. There is no effort, inspired by a desire to uplift the audience, to bring the audience *into* the drama, and, for their good, to make them feel it and to live with those who are acting. Such feeling is doubtless created by good plays and talented actors, but this is not the object of the management of the theatre, nor is it the object of the theatre-goer. Dramatics as a form of worship must have a very different aim, and it is the aim that makes all the difference. Dramatics as used for worship is not, needless to say, for money-making or for amusement and recreation. It is to help us to rise into the presence of our Father. If it cannot do this, then it is of no use in our Church services.

If religion is to be significant, it must be built into the fundamental emotional life of men and women and, more important, boys and girls. There is a

danger in a great deal of Protestant worship and in Protestant religious education, that this emotional side of our boys' and girls' requirements may be neglected. Especially is there a danger that the expressional side of the emotional life may be neglected. It is one thing to read about or hear about an emotional experience. It is another to experience the situation which called forth the emotion, and to act according to the dictates of the situation, and the emotion caused by the situation. This experiencing and expressing of emotion should form part of our worship. It is quite as important as the intellectual side of worship. But how difficult it is to secure it in the ordinary form of service. It is here that the drama can come to our aid.

Dr. Fosdick has said that beauty can often contribute more effectually than mere preaching to worship, which is being carried out of oneself by something which is higher than oneself, to which one gives oneself. Beauty can be of architecture, music, liturgy, or dramatic expression. Dramatic expression then, as an aid to worship must be a thing of beauty and must convey the effect of beauty to the souls of those who perform and those who watch. This means that the greatest care must be taken with the staging and with the general effects, with costumes, gestures and action. Nothing tawdry or unworthy should be allowed in a worship-drama. This does not mean to say that staging and costumes are to be elaborate and expensive. Beauty can be in things the most simple and plain. But it does mean that the greatest care must be taken in training and production and that on those who are in charge of producing the drama there

is the responsibility of maintaining the dignity and worthiness of the drama. This can be done with the simplest of means, and the cheapest of stage properties. It is chiefly a matter of the spirit in which it is done.

The drama enables ideas to be presented in so vivid a way that they become essential elements in the experience of those who watch it, and in watching, worship. Again it will be seen that the greatest care in preparation is needed. We are here dealing with a different aspect of the use of dramatics from that which we have discussed before, when emphasis was laid rather on self-expression in preparation than on the finished product. Here too, there is the exercise of self-expression for those who are taking part, but we must also consider carefully the finished product, since, in worship, our drama must be such that no flaws in production are present to destroy the effect. If it is well done, with dignity and reverence, those who are watching, as well as those who are actively taking part feel themselves caught up and sharing what is portrayed. Thus the atmosphere, such an important element in worship, is obtained, and the imagination of all is captured. Those present are carried along by the study of human religious experience which is unfolded, and all, actors and watchers, share in it, the former of course, more than the latter, but still all to a greater or lesser extent. Feeling and senses are appealed to primarily, but the whole personality, both of the actors and of the members of the congregation, is affected, and by all a sense of worship is gained through the drama. Both actors and audience, while they do not cease to think about religion, also learn

to feel it and to enter into the experience of others. The individual shares the experience presented by the drama and in this way, religion, being made an integral part of the emotional life, is also made far more full of meaning.

The idea of having plays performed as an act of worship is theoretically sound. It remains, as I have said, for individual pastors and teachers and congregations to make the experiment of having such worship-dramas and thus attempting to enrich their worship and their religious life. Different types of dramas will suit different groups. But I think it will be found that for all dramatics can be of the greatest value in worship. Particularly is this true of special occasions such as Easter, Christmas, Peace Day, and other special times and seasons. A well thought out, carefully prepared and produced drama, with suitable singing in which the audience can join, would form a far more impressive Church service than are most of our usual efforts. Needless to say, careful guidance and preparation are needed. But I am sure that all the effort and work thus expended would be far more than repaid, and that through such worship-dramas religion would take on a new meaning for all, both young and old.

## CHAPTER XII

### PUGNACITY

WHEN we desire very much to do something, we are prepared to put forth great efforts to obtain the object of our desire. We are prepared to give up certain things which would hinder our progress towards the attainment of our object. We are prepared to fight against and destroy, if necessary, things which seem to be obstacles in our way as we strive to progress. This tendency to fight and struggle in order to secure what we want or to secure progress and success in any direction, we call the instinct of pugnacity. The feeling that we have when our progress is stopped, when we are prevented from carrying out our purpose, when we do not get what we want, when our activities are stopped and thwarted, is the feeling of anger.

You have been arranging for the production of a play by your class. A rehearsal is to be held. Two actors do not turn up at the right time. The progress of your activity is thwarted and the pugnacious instinct begins to function. You get angrier and angrier as time passes and the two missing actors do not arrive. You take measures to overcome the difficulty by making some re-arrangement. When at last they do come, you take further measures calculated to

prevent a repetition of the offence. You are angry with, and distinctly pugnacious towards, the two offenders.

A small boy is going to the hockey field with a hockey-stick in his hand. He has a definite purpose. Another boy attempts to take the stick from him. The loss of the stick will prevent the progress of his activity. He therefore resists. If the second boy persists in his endeavours to get the stick, the first one gets angry, and then they begin to fight.

It will be seen that the feeling of anger results from the thwarting of the carrying out of a purpose, and results in fighting or other measures which will circumvent the thwarting, and enable the stream of energy to resume its flow towards the desired end. The strength of the feeling depends on the strength of the purpose and the strength of the opposition. If the small boy referred to above had not been very anxious to play hockey and would have just as soon played some other game, the attempt to take his stick would not have roused such strong feelings of anger, other things being equal. If the desire to play had been strong, but the boy with the stick had been big, and the boy who tried to take it, small, unless the small one looked like succeeding through some stratagem, the feeling of anger roused in the big boy would not be strong, because there would be no real danger of his purpose being thwarted or his activity stopped.

We must further note the difference between anger and indignation. We feel indignation at some wrong, or injustice, or cruelty affecting either ourselves or others. It is the same feeling as anger, but is anger of a particular kind, namely the anger roused

because of circumstances or actions which injure or prevent the progress of ideals which we hold dear, or because of actions which offend our sense of right and wrong. The person who has no ideals and no interest in the ultimate victory of right will not show indignation. Indignation and anger are the same feelings, but they are aroused by different kinds of objects and come in connexion with different purposes.

In the child of the West, this instinct of pugnacity is usually by no means weak. In Indian children, however, it is usually not strong enough. It is not a usual thing to see Indian boys fighting, as small boys in western countries do. While I do not wish to advocate encouraging small boys to fight, yet I do think that it would probably be all to the good if the pugnacious instinct were more strongly developed in Indian children. It is difficult to sublimate an instinct if it is weak, and the pugnacious instinct in its sublimated workings supplies a type of energy which is very necessary for the full development of the individual personality, and which is necessary for the country at large.

One reason why the Indian small boy does not indulge in fisticuffs as much as his young brother in the West, is that the Indian mother is more careful with her small son than the western mother in this matter, and discourages any such activities. The father follows suit because of unpleasantness which often arises between the womenfolk of the two families concerned when the small boys have been at variance. It is by no means unknown for such unpleasantness to arise in the West, but it does not as a rule go the lengths that it sometimes does in India. But if this

is the reason why small boy tussles are not common in India, the parents are I think doing a disservice to their sons and to their country. If the pugnacious instinct is not allowed this harmless expression, there is danger of the 'slave mentality' developing as the child grows up, and also the danger of a lack of 'grit' in the make-up of the child.

It is certainly better for small boys to fight, even with boxing gloves under supervision, than for them to indulge in the bad habit of tale-bearing which is so common, and which seems to be encouraged by so many teachers. Instead of learning to stand up for himself, the boy learns to run to his teacher at the slightest provocation, with tales about his class-fellows. The encouragement of this sort of thing is no training to give children whom you wish to grow up to be independent, and to face the world and its problems courageously. Tale-bearing in home or school is a thing against which every parent and teacher should rigidly set his face. By tale-bearing I mean the reporting of petty little injuries, especially with the object of revengefully getting another child into trouble. I do not mean to say anything against the establishment of a relation of confidence between son and father, daughter and mother, pupil and teacher, which will result in a free discussion of difficulties and troubles. What we have to set our faces against is the failure to develop self-reliance and determination.

We see the need for the development of the pugnacious instinct in the frequency with which one meets the excuse of *mera dil nahin lagta* offered as an all-sufficient reason for not going on with a particular work or staying in a particular place. A

boy goes to a new school and because the first or second day he feels out of place, homesick and uncertain of himself, he comes along and informs you that he doesn't like the place, *mera dil nahin lagta*, and that therefore he must be sent home or something special must be done for him.

In the same way, in taking up a new job, if he does not like it at once, then that is sufficient reason for leaving it at once. There seems very often to be a lack of the quality of determination to see a thing through in spite of difficulties, and to put up with unpleasant things for a while. This is due to a lack of the development of the pugnacious instinct, and I fear that parents must take the blame for this. The common fault of always letting the child have its own way in early life, which we noticed in connexion with the instinct of self-assertion, shows its evil effects here also. The development of the pugnacious instinct and its sublimation are therefore of the greatest importance in education in this country.

One reason for the weakness of this instinct is to be found in the educational system generally in vogue. The methods of teaching in general use are not such as to encourage the development of this instinct. They have, on the contrary, done much to help in developing a 'slave mentality'. Children are not taught to think for themselves, to find out things for themselves, to work for themselves, to solve difficulties for themselves. They are usually spoon-fed, simply with the idea that they will be able to reproduce at examination time large chunks of undigested facts that have been shovelled into them. The examination, of course, which throws its ill-omened shadow over so

much of our teaching, is framed to find out how many such facts the child knows or does not know (usually the latter). There is very little attempt to test how the child has learnt to get his facts, how he can use them, how he can weigh them, and discriminate between them or how he can independently judge their value. Yet if we are to get rid of the slave mentality this is what we should be training our children to do. We should be trying to produce a type of personality in which capacity for, and the habit of, independent thought is an essential factor. In doing this one of our great helpers is the pugnacious instinct.

We see the same evil effect of the lack of development of this instinct in the matter of the relations of missions and members of the Christian community. The mission compound philosophy of life has very little of the pugnacious in it. The lesson is being learned, though slowly in some places, and it should certainly be one of the tasks of Christian education to enforce it, that this soul-destroying principle of dependence on the mission is in the worst possible interests of the Christian church. It is most essential that it should not be perpetuated in the rising generation. The propagation of the doctrine of self-support is very difficult among adults because of the neglect of the development of the spirit of independence in past days. In times of financial stress the need for independence comes suddenly and in many cases with an unpleasant shock. One of our tasks is to see to it that the rising generation learns the need for independence as a normal thing, and grows up into independence. It is, therefore, within the scope of religious

education to try to inculcate the spirit of self-help and self-support. In the next chapter we will examine some ways in which this can be done.

There is a nemesis which finds us out when we neglect the development and sublimation of the pugnacious instinct in this connexion. Later in life, when a chance comes we may find the instinct, helped by that of self-assertion, expressing itself in most unhealthy and unpleasant ways. We are all acquainted with the phenomenon of the person who has had everything done for him by the mission, to which he owes all his education and every chance he has had in life, suddenly, on gaining a position of independence, turning on his benefactor and finding nothing bad enough to say about it. On every occasion he imputes unworthy motives, finds fault, opposes, and generally defiles the nest out of which he came. Independence has come to him late. It is an unaccustomed privilege. He has at last learned to think independently. But like new wine the ability and the opportunity goes to his head. He has not been trained through the course of his education to be independent, and now suddenly finds himself in pastures new. He does not know how to use his new-found advantages reasonably, and so he goes to extremes. There is an unconscious feeling against those and the system that have so long deprived him of his birthright. This unconscious feeling directs his new independent energies against the power to which he has so long been dependent. This at any rate is one possible explanation of a condition we all deplore, and should serve as a warning to us in our dealings with those whom we are training.

While it is necessary then to see that the instinct of pugnacity along with that of self-assertion is duly developed this does not mean that it is to be left to take its unsublimated course any more than any other instinct. Just as the herd instinct has to be sublimated through stages so has the instinct to fight to be controlled, not by bottling up the feelings, but by gradually enlarging the scope of function of the instinct and the objects for which we desire to fight, and refining the methods we use. There are wrong directions which this instinct can take, and against such activities we have to be on our guard. There are three directions in particular, away from which we should do our best to guide the functioning of the instinct of pugnacity.

The first is ordinary physical violence between individuals. What is perhaps harmless in small boys is degrading in adolescents and in grown-ups. This is sufficiently obvious, and there is no need to dwell on the point. What was said about small boys fighting must be qualified by the condition that it should be only a passing phase, and such expressions of the instinct should be discouraged as the boy grows up. Any encouragement of this fighting tendency in boys of from eight to twelve should be given only to those in whom the instinct does not seem to be strong enough. In those in whom it is strong measures for sublimation should be taken as soon as possible.

A second objectionable and dangerous method of giving expression to the instinct is that of making attacks, verbal or otherwise, on other communities in the same country, or on other parties in the same community. We have all too many examples of this in the communal differences which abound in India.

In the Christian church we get the same objectionable feature in attacks made by so-called fundamentalists on so-called modernists. In the political realm, the party system lends itself to a wrong exercise of the instinct of pugnacity. It is connected very closely with the herd instinct, especially when the latter results in narrowness of interest and in intolerance. We have to be on our guard in our religious education against doing anything that would lead to a development of a militant intolerance. This same militant intolerance has in the past often been displayed by Christians against other religions, though today such an attitude is happily disappearing.

A third objectionable and dangerous result of the unsublimated functioning of the instinct of pugnacity is seen in national and racial antipathies which culminate in war. One of the arguments sometimes used in favour of war is that man has this pugnacious instinct, and that some outlet for its energy must be found. This may be granted without it necessarily following that war is necessary to provide that outlet.

‘Conflict is civilizing when it involves an effort (1) to understand the opposing factor; and (2) to invent a means whereby the opposition is succeeded by fruitful co-operation.’<sup>1</sup>

‘In time of war, on the other hand, this wholesome interpenetrative unity becomes a split-in-two. Each combatant builds a psychological wall about itself, shutting out the other. Upon normal, organic association, in short, there supervenes (except for destructive relationships) a complete dissociation.’<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. A. Overstreet, *Influencing Human Behaviour*, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

War could not go on unless there were present everywhere a refusal to try to understand the enemy or to see his view-point. The condition of the world today is a sufficient commentary on the second point made by Dr. Overstreet, namely that conflict to be civilizing must involve an effort to invent a means whereby opposition is succeeded by fruitful co-operation.

As teachers, parents, pastors, one of our chief tasks in the world today is to seek by all the means within our power to help our children so to sublimate their pugnacious instincts and herd instincts that the destructive forces of intense nationalism and class hatred, which are so rife in the world today, may lose their power. A great deal of the damage is done by a misguided teaching of history, in which struggles, wars, battles, conquests, and national glory are made the main features. No teacher can do more service to his country, and to the world in general at present, than by teaching history, not from the standpoint of any one nation, but from a world point of view. The history class-room can be the place where the foundation of a sane understanding of, and a thoughtful attitude to, national questions are laid. History can be the subject par excellence, for enabling our future citizens to think of problems, national or otherwise from an international point of view, and for enabling our citizens to act, not as citizens of one country, out to secure its own supremacy or its own security at the expense of everyone else, but as citizens of the world. It is one of the tasks of religious education never to allow history to be prostituted, to become the weapon of selfish nationalism, ignorant superiority,

and a total disregard of the law of cause and effect in international life.

Let us now consider in what ways this instinct may be sublimated.

One of the best ways of commencing this task with boys and girls is by means of games. Most games suitable for children and adolescents call forth striving. This striving, of course, should not be allowed to develop into a free fight with hockey-sticks as has been known to happen. But properly controlled, first individual games and later team games form a valuable outlet for pugnacious energy.

A great deal can be done in the class-room to sublimate the instinct of pugnacity if right methods of teaching are used. I have referred already to the evil effects of spoon-feeding. Naturally, if every difficulty is smoothed out, if every problem is solved, and children are left with nothing to do for themselves, the instinct will display itself in other ways, probably objectionable. But if the child is trained to face difficulties in its work, to solve problems by itself, to complete tasks set it with only that help from the teacher which is absolutely necessary, the pugnacious instinct is sublimated into being used for fighting and conquering difficulties. This is a gradual and progressive process. The teacher must be careful to see that the difficulties confronting the child are not too great for him, that he can solve the problem if he really puts himself to it. Only such help should be given as is absolutely necessary, and that help should take the form, not of telling the child, but of leading him to understand how to tackle his difficulty and how to solve the

problem himself. If teaching in the class-room is carried on in this way it can be of great assistance in sublimating the instinct of pugnacity. This is one reason why systems of individual work, such as the Dalton Plan, are very desirable.

During adolescence the pugnacious energies may be directed towards such activities as village uplift work; the conquest of disease; improvement of sanitary conditions; establishing better living conditions; inculcation of lessons of co-operation; fighting against evil and conservative social customs. These are ideals which appeal to the adolescent and, especially in rural areas, many opportunities for such activities can be found. As we have seen, in these matters the sublimation of the instinct of pugnacity and that of self-assertion can go hand in hand. Adolescence is the time when a worthy ideal and worthy objects of loyalty are to be presented. The instinct of pugnacity can greatly aid in helping the individual to be loyal to the highest he knows, and to attain the ideal he has set before himself.

Those in whom the pugnacious instinct has been sublimated in this way are those from among whom come our social reformers, our disciples of truth, our internationalists and our apostles of progress. Pugnacious energy helps us to stand for the right, to abide by the voice of conscience, and to face a world in opposition. Working together with the self-assertive instinct, the pugnacious instinct is of inestimable value, and for the development of a strong robust personality, no instinct is of more importance, *provided* it is sublimated. Our task is twofold, to develop and to sublimate.

## CHAPTER XIII

### CULTIVATING THE INDEPENDENT SPIRIT: SELF-SUPPORT

IN a country where the average person is as badly off as he is in India, the question of financing the education of the boys of the family, not to speak of the girls, is usually a very difficult one. Many families find it difficult, if not impossible, to get on without the meagre earnings of the small children, and then, if they are sent to school, there is, as well as the loss of income, the additional burden of fees and books and extra clothes. This difficulty is especially pressing in the case of large numbers of village Christians. Yet, on the other hand, education is absolutely necessary for the future of the community and of the Church. What then is to be done?

As we noticed in the previous chapter there has, in the past, been far too much of the mission compound method. In many cases missions have attempted to meet the difficulties in the situation by paying almost entirely for the education of certain Christian children, the number of whom is limited only by the mission budget, while at the same time an attempt is made to get the parents to contribute what they can to help to meet the expenses of their children's education. In some places where the

parents are better off, or where they are really keen on education, they have made a real contribution to the upkeep of their children at school. In such cases results have not been as bad as they might have been. In cases where the mission, because of the poverty of the parents, and because of a lack of real enthusiasm for education among the parents, has provided most of the support, if not all of it, the results have certainly not been good. The attitude of both parents and children leaves a great deal to be desired. Especially in the children there is developed a false and vicious dependence, a soft and injured attitude to life, while they are altogether lacking in that grit and pugnacity which should be found in every well-developed personality.

From both the economic and the educational point of view the most hopeful line of approach to the solution of this problem is along the line of self-support, where the children may be provided with opportunities to help to support themselves, so that while in school they may be able to do something, by means of which they may earn and so contribute to their own support. If schemes of self-support can be inaugurated, by which boys and girls are given regular work, whereby they can earn money with which to pay part at least of their fees and other expenses, this unhealthy dependence on an outside agency may be largely done away with, and the children have the feeling that they are depending on their own efforts. There is no doubt about the improvement in their general attitude to life which such a feeling engenders, and also the increased value which they place on their education.

It is an excellent thing, as a matter of fact, for all children, whether their parents are rich or poor, to have opportunities to help themselves in this way. Especially is this true of boarding-schools where the child, being away from home, does not get the opportunities for helping in the home which the child in the day-school gets. It is not good for children to depend completely on their parents when they have reached the age when they can do something for themselves, any more than it is good for them to depend on the mission. Whether the work done is to help out a desperate financial situation, or is simply done as a contribution to the general life of the school, it is valuable and necessary for all.

There will certainly be objections to such schemes of self-support, and schools where such innovations are attempted will not be looked on with favour by large numbers of parents, and, therefore, by their children. Such objections, too, do not by any means always come from those who do not need the financial help that such schemes give. In many places, as the result of mistaken mission policy, the idea has grown up that it is the right of the poor Christian to have free education for his children and free books and clothes while the education is being given. Such parents object to their children being asked to do what I have heard one of them describe as 'servants' work'. Such an attitude is, of course, reflected in the children, and this often makes it very difficult to establish ways and means of providing opportunities for self-support. To any one who tries to do this in the ordinary school, it will soon become apparent that self-support schemes are things which cannot be

made a recognized part of school life in a month or in a year. It cannot become a tradition even in two or three years. It is a long business. Therefore the sooner it is begun the better.

It is true that a change is coming over India in this matter among parents in general. It is being slowly recognized that there is nothing really dis-honourable in manual work for an educated man, even if it is a 'trifle inconvenient at times'. I have known boys who, of their own volition, because they knew that their parents were desperately hard up, come and ask for work to do in order that they might earn their fees. They took on a cook's work and kept at it right through a Punjab hot season, which was a fairly stiff test of their determination. They carried on with their school work at the same time. In this case the boys themselves recognized the position. Very often this will not be the case. When there is opposition to self-support schemes, especially when so-called 'servants' work' is required, there is only one way of showing objectors that their attitude is wrong. This is for the teacher himself, or herself, to work with the pupils. If we simply stand off and issue orders it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to inculcate the right attitude. If, however, our pupils see us with spade or broom in hand doing the jobs we are asking them to do, many of the difficulties will melt away. It is difficult for a pupil to refuse to do something because it is beneath him if his teacher is doing it. It is impossible for him to stand by and see his teacher working while he does not. This is one of those numerous cases where an ounce of example is worth a ton of precept. The teacher who is successful

in carrying on self-support schemes is the teacher who is not afraid to work himself.

One of the main difficulties in any such scheme of self-support, is to arrange for work, and to ensure that it will not interfere unduly with the ordinary school work. That it can be done has been shown by the experience of Moga where the boys do on an average one and a half days' work out of the six, and do their ordinary school work in the rest. The latter does not suffer. Agriculture, one of the main lines of work, is one of the school subjects. But even if it is not possible to provide avenues of work whereby the financial return is great, still, if the principle is established that the pupils shall do something, even if it is only a little, to support themselves, the effect on character and personality is excellent. Self-respect and independence are developed and a much stronger attitude to the world is inculcated. A better and truer idea of education is gained by the pupils and a better attitude to so-called menial and manual work is engendered.

There are numbers of ways in which middle and high school students may contribute something to their own support.

One of the first of these which will suggest itself is the doing of work in connexion with the boarding-house, which would otherwise have to be done by servants. By this the wages of servants are saved. Thus the pupils can do the cooking, or, if not the whole of the cooking work, can at least render such help as will cut down the number of cooks or assistants necessary. Then, too, a great deal can be done in connexion with the work of keeping the

hostel clean. This, obviously, apart from the financial considerations involved, has very great educational value both for boys and girls. Where boarding-houses are arranged on the cottage or some such system, the organization itself lends itself to the establishing of schemes of work in connexion with the boarding-house. It approximates more to a home and therefore many of the home opportunities can be given.

Another way in which something may be done towards the self-support of pupils is by means of the farm. But even where such an elaborate arrangement is not possible, the school garden may be of great use. Here again two purposes may be served. In the case of village children the growing of vegetables may be, later on, when they go back to their villages, a very useful secondary occupation which may be of great help to the family exchequer. Anything that they learn about how to grow vegetables may thus be of great use to them when they leave school. From the other point of view, the products of the school garden may help materially with the food expenses of the children. If there is plenty of water, and the gardening party which works every evening or afternoon is moderately large, a great deal can be done in this way. Not more than an hour's work a day is necessary.

Allied with this is the school orchard. Here again the same two uses are served. There is a difficulty in the matter of growing fruit, and that is the inveterate inclination of the small boy to fill himself up with green fruit. The difficulty may be met by giving trees to individual boys or groups of trees to groups of boys and allowing them a certain percentage

on what is made out of the tree or trees. This will ensure a strict watch being kept. Another plan that can be used is for the pupils to cultivate the orchard and look after the crop. Then in the fruit season, they can sell the crop to anyone in the neighbourhood who may wish to take it. A school orchard is feasible, of course, only in some parts of the country. It has been made a very successful project in the hills.

Another avenue for self-support that can be used with advantage is the school co-operative shop. In a place where the school is close to town or village, and where an opening on to a frequented road can be secured, it is possible to start a real shop on a business basis. In this anything may be sold for which there is a demand. There will always be a demand for stationery from the school itself, and such things as sports' goods, groceries, stockings, and so on may be sold. The plan is for the shareholders to do the work of the shop themselves. The pupils who are shareholders can be on duty each day in pairs and can conduct all the business. They will take it in turns, and get a turn perhaps once a month. The shop remains open all day, and work in the shop counts as a school attendance. It is a practical method of teaching arithmetic, and it will be obvious that there are numerous other educational values in the project. There are also obvious dangers. There is liable to be some stealing, especially if eatables are stocked. Sometimes there will be mistakes in the change handed out by the amateur shopkeepers. Sometimes money is lost. My experience with such a shop has been, however, that on the whole it can be quite a successful project, and by means of it pupils can make

quite an appreciable contribution towards their upkeep.

Another way in which opportunity for self-support can be given is by having tailoring as a subject in the school curriculum. This can be made quite a successful venture, and if boys are started on it from the time they start school, when they get into the middle school they are able to make ordinary clothes for themselves, and also to do their own mending.

In this way they are able to do quite a lot for themselves and they have also learned something which will be of the greatest use when they leave school. Another line is poultry-keeping. This can be made a paying project provided that there is available for supervision and instruction someone who knows something about it. Otherwise there is financial risk in it.

These things which I have mentioned are things which have been tried and have been found to work. Suitable projects will vary according to the locality and the type of children. It may seem to the reader that we have wandered a long way from religious education, and that shopkeeping and poultry-farming have little to do with the abundant life. But I feel strongly that in the present state of things in the Christian community in India, this subject of self-support in schools is a vital one, and that it has a very vital connexion with the true development of the personalities of our pupils. The instincts of self-assertion and pugnacity are not given the opportunities to develop as they should unless scope is provided for development of independence of character. The particular method or work used

matters little as long as the principle of fending for oneself is thoroughly inculcated.

In doing this there are difficulties. There will be disappointments. But they can be overcome, and some such scheme ought to have a place in every school which wishes to deserve the name of school. A determined effort to educate the parents, and the children in this matter, will be of the greatest service to the community. One thing we must be careful to provide, and that is careful organization and supervision. Work schemes will not run themselves. They have to be carefully organized, and once started need continual and careful watching. If this care is given, however, there is no reason why any of such schemes should not be successfully introduced in any school.





## CHAPTER XIV

### CURIOSITY

THE instinct of curiosity with its feeling of wonder, resulting in interest and attention, is the foundation of all advance in knowledge and of all organization of knowledge. It is the basis of all our sciences, the foundation of all experiment. From it comes the urge to discover, to invent, to evolve theories; to put those theories to the test of practice. To it we owe the conquest of the earth, the sea, the air and all that in them is. It is an instinct which it should be easy to sublimate. What is chiefly necessary is organization of the interests aroused and the efforts in which it results, and, of course, the direction of those efforts to worthy objects. It is an instinct which is of peculiar value and importance for those who are engaged in educating the young, both parents and teachers.

Everyone knows how the small child shows this instinct as soon as he can touch and handle. Everyone knows how, as the child grows and learns to speak, his whole day seems to be a long series of questions, and I suppose many of us have grown tired of the interminable, what, why and how, especially when we sometimes find it difficult to answer some of the posers put by our small examiners. Never on

any account, however, should we do anything to curb this desire to ask questions. Never should we allow impatience to cause us to snub the eager desire for knowledge. It may not seem particularly important to us for our child to know just why we put that particular thing in that particular place, or what particular person made that particular observation and why. But it is, at the time, of vital importance to our child, and even though it makes no ultimate difference to his success in life to know the answers to all his questions, that is not the point. The point is that it is of vital, extremely vital, importance for his success in life that he should learn to ask questions and learn to want the answers. Therefore we should go out of our way to answer all questions, and should be prepared to sacrifice ourselves in order to help him to strengthen his instinct of curiosity. We should do nothing to make him frightened of asking questions. If we do, we are fighting against ourselves as we shall find later on when we wish him to take an intelligent interest in subjects he is studying, and in problems of conduct and life that come before him.

There is a type of teacher who, for some unknown reason, perhaps for his own unhappy amusement, is in the habit of ridiculing what he is pleased to term stupid questions. Soon his pupils learn to avoid, with the greatest carefulness, asking him any questions. They have a terrible uncertainty as to whether the question they wish to ask is a 'foolish' one or not. They are not going to take any risks in the matter of being held up to ridicule in front of the class, and so they sit silent, and that teacher loses half his efficiency as a teacher.

There is another type of teacher who gets angry when his pupils ask him a question to which he considers they should know the answer. They have 'done' it before. Because his pupils naturally do not wish to risk becoming the unfortunate objects of his wrath, they do not ask questions for fear that they will be supposed to know the answer. So they never learn the answer, and at the end of the term that teacher wonders why his class know so little.

There is only one type of question that can properly be termed foolish, and that is the question which the child asks to save himself the trouble of thinking out the answer for himself. He may not be consciously trying to save himself trouble, but he asks a question to which it is possible for him to find the answer himself. The way to deal with such questions is not by ridicule or anger, but by showing the child that he really knows the answer himself, or at least can find the answer for himself, and does not need to ask the question. That is, the asking of the question should be made an opportunity of training the child to think for himself. But never on any account should we do anything that will curb the desire of the child to ask us questions. Especially in connexion with religious subjects, there should be no suggestion of any lack of frankness or any suggestion of any taboo. The instinct of curiosity is to be encouraged as much as possible. The patience required will be amply rewarded as we see the development of our children as they grow up.

In connexion with this instinct and the way in which it manifests itself in the asking of questions, there is a principle which cannot be too strongly

emphasized. Give truthful answers. If possible this should be more strongly emphasized in connexion with religious teaching. My own opinion is that it is a principle that should hold good at all ages. This does not mean to say that we can expect to teach a child the whole of known truth or the whole of what we know about the truth in any particular matter. But it does mean that we should so impart knowledge to the child that he does not later have to unlearn what we have told him. What we tell him may not be all the truth, even as far as we know it, but it should be a sound foundation on which he can build.

There is a difference of opinion as to how far poetical ideas may be employed with children up to seven or eight years of age. Personally I think it is better to stick to the truth from the beginning. A western child loses nothing, but rather gains if he is not brought up on the myth of Santa Claus, while if he is to be undeceived later by companions, there is the grave danger of his losing his faith in his parents. There is no point in teaching a child that the stars are the windows of heaven through which God looks down, giving him false ideas of heaven and God which he has to unlearn later. The truth can be made just as beautiful and interesting as fairy stories. So we can take it as a principle then, always to give truthful or truthward-leading answers.

It is when the child is still quite young that we should be laying the foundation of the habit of truth-telling and setting him on the path that will lead to the formation of a love-of-truth sentiment. Parent and teacher have a telling influence in this matter. Carelessness with the truth in either of them will

surely reflect itself in the children. We do not know how early this work of building up a love of truth begins. Certainly we cannot take any risks with such an important matter, and should be particularly careful of the answers that we give to our children's questions. There should be no chance of the children getting any impression that the truth is not very important, and that we can depart from it occasionally if we wish to.

Especially is this the case in regard to questions about religious subjects. We should never give a child answers to questions on religious subjects which will put him on to the wrong track, and cause him to learn things which he will have to unlearn later on. Life is made difficult for him and we lose the trust and confidence of our child if we do so. I am not meaning to imply that answering all a child's questions in this way is an easy matter. A child can ask questions on religious subjects to which all the wisdom of mankind has not been able to supply satisfactory answers. In such cases, whether it be in home or in school, we should not be afraid to say that we do not know.

Parents and teachers, more especially the latter perhaps, sometimes have the idea that they must never be caught not knowing the answer to a question. Prestige demands that they shall never be at a loss. It being impossible for any one human being to know all that any one child will ask about, especially in connexion with religion, the result is that the teacher tries to put off the child with evasive answers, fondly believing that ignorance is successfully veiled. In most cases it is a vain hope. Far better

to say frankly that we do not know. Then take advantage of the position, if dealing with older children to employ the group-discussion method and go into the question all together.

It is in dealing with children of ages of eight and nine onwards, that questionings on religious and Biblical matters will arise. Before that age the child will accept many things, such as miracles, without question or wonder. But from nine or so onwards, the child begins to get curious and critical. The question comes, 'What should we tell the child about various things found in the Bible?' The only answer possible is that we teach them what we believe ourselves, but with this all-important proviso, that we do really have beliefs ourselves, and not simply second-hand relics of what other people have believed; that we are able to give a reason for the faith that is in us. Whether we are parents or teachers or pastors, we cannot undertake to teach the young until we have a first-hand belief and experience to impart to them. Having that, let us bravely teach what we believe. The fact that our parents and grandparents believed a thing is not a valid reason for our believing it, still less for our teaching it.

If we find that certain ideas of God found in the Old Testament are incompatible with the ideas taught by Jesus, let us not try to teach both sets of ideas, shutting our eyes to the incompatibility, and hoping that our children will do so too. Under the hypnotism of our suggestion they may do so, but a day of awakening will come. If we do not believe that Balaam's ass spoke or that the sun stood still for Joshua, let us refrain from trying to make our children

believe it. At the same time, if the children are old enough the position may be explained and the explanation of how the story arose given. Dealing with the instinct of curiosity requires a great deal of hard work and study from us if we are to make any sort of success of our work.

We should never be afraid of questionings and doubts in our religious educational work. In fact, this questioning attitude is what we ought to be trying to develop, as without it a true experience of God may never be reached. Questioning and doubt are the beginnings of constructive revolution, and this is what we need. Especially do we need the questioning, experimenting spirit in India in all branches of progressive work, and most of all in its religious basis.

'I scarcely need refer here, even in passing, to the effect of our educational system upon youth's natural curiosity and to our parallel failure to develop a questioning attitude in the Church. Some years ago Professor Rankin called attention to the contentment of Indian youth with its grandfather's religion; and even today when that youth is no longer content with much of anything, there seem to be but few signs of widespread and constructive questioning likely to lead to the building of the Kingdom with all its thrill of high constructive achievement. Such signs as there are can scarcely be credited to either the school or the Church in terms of their direct programmes and ordinary practices.'<sup>1</sup>

In the sphere of religion the instinct of curiosity is sublimated into the study of theology, a study of

<sup>1</sup> Article by E. L. King, 'The Message of the Kingdom of God', *The Educational Method of Jesus*, p. 47.

biblical background, of comparative religions, of practical applications of the teaching of Jesus Christ to the problems of our day. No more worth-while task can be undertaken than this last, not simply by pastors and teachers of religion but by everyone who calls himself or herself a follower of Jesus. Youth is the time when this study of applications and these experiments with applications can find the enthusiasm necessary. As teachers of religion and leaders of youth we can have no higher ideal than to harness the enthusiasm of our charges to the work of bringing the Kingdom to the daily practical life of the world.

Only as we develop this habit of practical application can we help our young people to bring about the great result of the sublimation of the instinct of curiosity, namely the securing of a firm basis for belief in experience. We hear a great deal in these days about authority in religion, authority of the Church and authority of the Bible. There is only one true and unshakeable authority in religion, the authority which Jesus Christ had, and that is the authority of experience. When we can say 'I know' because we have experienced, nothing can shake us. This is the ideal to which a true development of the instinct of curiosity will lead us.

There is a special sphere in our religious education where our dealings with the instinct which we are considering are of vital importance. This is in connexion with questions asked by small children on sex matters. Small children will be interested in sex matters, not because of any workings of the sex instinct, though there may be the beginnings of such workings, unconsciously functioning (though not to

the extent that Freud would have us believe), but simply from curiosity. Just as they are curious about everything connected with themselves and their lives so they will be curious about things connected with sex.

We have to make up our minds how we are going to deal with such questions when they come, as come they surely will. Are we going to indulge in some of the downright untruths about storks and the black bags of doctors? Are we going to avoid the issue by such half-truths as that God sends babies? Are we going to be perfectly frank and answer frankly the questions that are asked us?

I maintain that on this subject, just as on any other subject, perfect frankness is the course we ought to adopt. A great deal of the trouble in connexion with sex is that we make it a matter of secrecy, shame, and taboo, instead of *from the beginning* treating it as a natural thing about which there is nothing to be secretive. It is this false secretiveness and modesty that does more than anything else to create the false attitude towards sex matters, and the false interest in them which is so common, among elder children and adults. The damage is very often done right at the beginning, because natural questions, arising out of pure curiosity, are met with a 'hush! hush!' attitude by the parent or teacher, and are not dealt with as naturally as questions on other subjects.

Of one thing we can be absolutely sure, and that is that if we do not treat questions on such subjects naturally and frankly, we are going to create a wrong attitude to the subject and, most important of all, we are not going to stop our children asking questions;

rather the reverse. The child's curiosity is whetted by the uncomfortable attitude created by his question, by the evasive answer, by the prohibition from asking such questions. If we will not give the information, we are simply stimulating that which we wish to avoid, an unhealthy curiosity and interest in sex matters. The child will get the information he wants. Of that let there be no doubt. If we will not give it to him he will get it from the bazar, from other children, from evilly-disposed older children, from the gutter; but get it he will. We will have only ourselves to blame when we discover, after having had our heads comfortably buried in the sand, that our child knows as much about these things as we do, and has an entirely wrong attitude to them which it is extremely difficult to eradicate. This will cause him to have to face the toughest of difficulties as he grows, and to have no uncertain opinion about the way in which we treated him in his young days.

On the other hand, if, realizing that the child is going to get this information, and realizing that there is no good reason why he should not have it, we begin to give it to him naturally from an early age, our child then looks on it as a normal part of life. He becomes accustomed to regard sex matters, when they do come up, as something perfectly natural. There is none of that false secrecy and furtive laughter and whispering. And when he grows into adolescence and the sex instinct begins to make its urge felt, half his battle has been already fought and won without his realizing that there was any battle.

One should be guided then by the questions that children ask. Young children of three or four may

ask questions about where babies come from, especially if and when brothers and sisters are born. Children of such age even should be given truthful answers to their questions. They will be satisfied without going into details. Later they may ask more searching questions. These should be answered by mothers or fathers with complete frankness and absence of embarrassment. We find this difficult simply because most of us have been wrongly brought up, and cannot know the innocent mind of the child as he approaches the subject. We should be careful never to put it into the head of a child that there is anything shameful in connexion with the birth of a brother or sister.

Out in a village, of course, the opportunities for a natural approach to the subject are greater, as the birth of animals is a commonplace. The small village child is naturally interested and his questions begin. Then, too, his education can begin and continue as a perfectly natural thing.

If the parent has so answered the child's questions from the earliest days, then there is confidence and freedom between the parent and the child. The child's burden when the changes of adolescence begin is much lessened. The boy or girl will not be afraid to come to father or mother and ask about the changes that are taking place. One of the unfortunate features of adolescence, unfortunate because it could be avoided if only parents would deal with sex matters naturally from the very beginning, is that boys and girls have learned to regard sex matters as taboo and unclean, and are frightened to ask about things which are happening to them. As a result they go through a time of fear, uncertainty, and moral depression.

They have not been allowed to talk or question about these things, their parents do not realize what is happening, and so the children suffer. Sometimes parents think that they have done their duty when they give their children a book. This is usually useless, and often positively harmful. Nothing can take the place of the frank talking over of things by the parent with the child, and this can be done successfully only when it has been a habit from the earliest days of the child's life.

Sometimes the question arises as to when sex instruction should begin. As a rule one can be guided by the questions of the child. If, however, the age of six or seven has been reached without any questions on the subject from the child, it is probably wise for the parent to take the initiative, working from flowers to animals and so on. Probably such a need to take the initiative arises very seldom in the village, and in the town chiefly in the case of only children.

In this matter of dealing with questions about sex matters I have written of what the parent should do. This is primarily a matter for the parent, and no one can do it as well as the parent. In case, however, it is obvious to the teacher or pastor that the parents of some of his children are neglecting their duty then he must do his best. In the cases of boarding-schools for small children, where the children are away from their homes for so many months in the year, in this as in other matters the teacher must do the work of the parent. He will naturally find it more difficult, as there is not the same likelihood of spontaneous questioning on the part of the child. The teacher will succeed in proportion to the measure in which he has gained the

confidence of his young charges, so that they are not afraid to ask him questions nor is he afraid to answer them. But for teacher and parent alike the principle must be to use the first question which gives him or her the opportunity of naturally taking up the subject.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE SEX INSTINCT

As we have seen, adolescence is the period when the sex instinct makes itself powerfully felt for the first time. This instinct, claimed by Freud and his followers to be the most powerful of human tendencies, to which can be ascribed the ruling power in our lives right from the time of earliest infancy, if not before, has, even though we may not admit the extravagant claims of Freud, an extremely potent influence over everyone. Especially in the days of adolescence is it of vital importance and fills a very large part of life. The instinct develops and makes itself felt later in life than the other instincts, though functioning to some extent in the unconscious during childhood.

The fact, however, that, though not coming to full power until adolescence, the instinct is gradually developing and having its unrecognized effect, should open our eyes to the fact that the task of dealing with, and sublimating, this instinct cannot be left until adolescence, when it begins to make itself evident, and, in many cases, so powerfully and unpleasantly evident. Sex education aiming at control and sublimation should start, as we have seen in the previous chapter, very early in life. Again let me emphasize the frank answering of questions as the first step along

the right road. One of our great difficulties is to get away from the feeling of false shame and abnormality which surrounds the subject. This can be done only if the subject is treated naturally and as a matter of course. It is very difficult to treat it in a matter-of-course way if explanations are left till the instinct begins to make itself felt in the conscious life of the child. The Lambeth Conference of 1930 said that 'it is important that before a child's emotional reaction to sex is awakened, definite information should be given in an atmosphere of simplicity and beauty'.

This is the first stage in dealing with this instinct. The second stage comes when the adolescent begins to meet difficulties and problems. He has to take up an attitude towards sex and sex matters. He finds that these subjects loom very large in the minds of many of his companions. The urge of the instinct in himself may bring him into strange new situations. He is afloat on an uncharted sea and needs a compass. There are two ways in which he may get the guidance he needs.

The first, and definitely the best, is for the boy to get his guidance from his father and the girl her guidance from her mother. If the relationships between the parents and their children are such that they can discuss things frankly together, and the elder partner in the discussion group of two can give the younger the benefit of a riper and larger experience, the way of the children will be much smoother. One thing the parents should avoid doing, as we have seen<sup>1</sup> is to give the boy or girl a book on the subject, thinking then that they have done their job.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 223.

There are grave dangers in handing books on such subjects to adolescents and nothing can take the place of, or have so great a value as, personal talks and discussion.

The second way is also a discussion method. This is where a number of adolescents come together under a suitable leader and together try to arrive at decisions as to what are right courses of action and right attitudes to adopt in connexion with various sex matters and difficulties. That is, the group try to form a fairly definite idea of how they should act under certain circumstances and why; of what religion has to say on the matter, and of how religion helps them; of what guidance the teaching and life of Jesus give. Thus pitfalls may be avoided and uncertainty and doubt resolved.

'On such a subject as sex attitudes there is no need to superinduce emotion. It will come naturally enough, and sufficiently enough in the right religious atmosphere. Far more needed is a definite attempt to decide, in view of all the facts and in view of the highest social ideals, what ought to be our conduct. A group engaged in such study and investigation would very naturally be moved to prayer. What is the will of God in this difficult moral problem? How may we find the wholesome joys of life that have only beneficent social consequences? Religious education must create situations for the healthy, and not the morbid, discussion of these problems.'<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of adolescence the leader can use such discussion groups as opportunities for giving clear information on sex hygiene and on the social

<sup>1</sup> T. G. Soares, *Religious Education*, p. 243.

bearings of the sex instinct. In every case, whatever is done should have a religious basis, and should be positive. In no case should young adolescents be frightened by wrong and unwise teaching. Whether discussion groups are held or not this information should be given carefully, and sympathetically. It should be given at the beginning of adolescence.

Fundamental to all efforts to aid our children in the difficulties caused by the sex instinct, is the inculcation of a worthy view of women. From the earliest stages we must set ourselves to discourage all idea of the inferiority of women, of their dependence on men, of their duty to be submissive to men, of anything whatever which savours of vassalage or of the rights of men over women. We must do our best to lead our boys and girls to understand that men and women are equals, that superior physical strength gives men no rights over women, and that women are to be held in honour and respect. Above all must we teach that there is no double standard of morality, one for men and another for women. If gradually the ideal of equality, and of honour and respect of women, can be built up in our children as they develop; if the boys grow up with a chivalrous respect for *all* girls and women; if the girls grow up with a self-respect unburdened with any inferiority complexes; and most important, if neither boys nor girls ever learn the so prevalent idea that girls and women are not to be trusted, then their adolescent life will be preserved from many disasters.

'We may enforce this point by imagining a normal boy subjected to influences of either of two extreme types. On the one hand, he may at an early age be

led to regard woman as an animal endowed with a strong sex impulse, always seeking its gratification, and ever ready to co-operate with him in obtaining sensual pleasures. There could be no "long circuiting" or sublimation of the sex energy in such a case. On the other hand, the boy who knows women, and who knows of them, only as superior beings to himself that deserve his profoundest respect and admiration, and who, when he learns the facts of sex and feels the powerful and mysterious attraction of a woman's body, believes that he cannot approach any one woman with the least hope of intimacy, unless he preserves an attitude of the utmost delicacy and respect, and then only by way of a long course of devoted service by which he may show his worth and his superiority to rival suitors; in such a boy the repression of the immediate promptings of the sex instinct is as inevitable as their free indulgence in the former case; and the energy of its impulse will lend itself to reinforce all those activities which appear to him as the indispensable means towards the attainment of the natural end of this, the strongest tendency of his nature.<sup>1</sup>

This raises the question of co-education and its effect on the relation of the sexes. Mr. Lenwood writes: 'It is illuminating to find that essential immorality is worst where there is most attempt to prevent it by the segregation of the sexes.'<sup>2</sup> Experience of life in the army in war-time leads to corroboration of the statement that segregation of the sexes leads to a great increase of immorality. It must

<sup>1</sup> W. McDougall, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, p. 419.

<sup>2</sup> F. Lenwood, *Social Problems and the East*, p. 89.

be remembered, of course, with regard to the army that it was adults who were segregated. But in India, the fact that boys see so little of girls, and have so little normal social intercourse with them, is, as we have mentioned,<sup>1</sup> undoubtedly responsible for the prevalence of unnatural vice. The fact that girls and boys do not mix renders the normal development of sex life in adolescence impossible, and it will be very difficult to deal adequately with the problems caused by the development of the sex instinct during adolescence until this state of affairs is remedied.

Objection to co-education in the primary school and college stages is rapidly decreasing, certainly among Christians. But co-education in the secondary stage is not likely to become general for many a long day. Yet this is just the time in life when there should be normal social intercourse. The dangers of co-educational secondary schools are admittedly great. Those in England who conduct them are enthusiastic in their support and hold that the so greatly feared dangers are largely illusory. In England co-educational day secondary schools are not so common as in America and in some of the Dominions. There are reasons against co-educational secondary schools, too, apart from matters connected with the mingling of the sexes. But it does seem certain that whether in school or out of it, there should be chances for boys and girls of adolescent age to meet normally and naturally. I know that such a change cannot be made all at once in India. But our problems will never be satisfactorily solved until this is done, and we ought to try to do what we can in this direction.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iv.

'That India should suddenly adopt such a measure (co-education) would seem unwise perhaps; but that she should see to it that young people of both sexes do meet under proper conditions would certainly help to meet what seems to be a lack in Indian life generally. In addition the adoption of a co-educational policy covering a generation or two of students could then be inaugurated and would seem to me to be both wise and helpful. If there is a danger today it is that the change will come too abruptly.'<sup>1</sup>

Having laid a foundation of sane attitudes to the subject of sex, strengthened this with helpful relationships between parents and children at adolescence, raised a fortress of chivalrous thought and attitude towards women, thoughts and attitudes which will find scope for expression in a normal social life where boys and girls meet, we have next to consider the question of the sublimation of the instinct. This is as important in the case of the sex instinct as in the case of any other instinct, perhaps in many individuals more important, for the simple reason that the instinctive urge in this case is so strong that all the available outlets that can be made use of are valuable.

'The problem before every civilization that aspires to attain and maintain a high level of culture is, therefore, not merely so to regulate the sex instinct as to prevent its exerting an influence injurious to the interests of the higher culture, while it performs its all-important primary function; but also to direct it in such a fashion that its immense energy shall be

<sup>1</sup> Dr. J. H. Gray in *The Young Men of India, Burma and Ceylon*, October 1932, article entitled 'Some Aspects of the Sex Problem in India'.

brought as freely as possible into the service of the higher culture.<sup>1</sup>

The most obvious channel of sublimation for the sex instinct is creative work. When busily engaged in creative work the sexual desires are not nearly so strong as at other times, and, in fact, often disappear altogether for a time. Hence a great deal of what we discussed with regard to the sublimation of the self-assertive instinct is applicable here. There is a great deal of self-assertion connected with the working of the sex instinct, and for those in whom this tendency is strongly developed, creative work is the means of sublimation. For adolescents in school there are various forms of creative work which may be brought into use. In literature and art, in handwork of various kinds, the sex instinct with its creative urge can find a means of expression which will relieve the individual of much of its overwhelming character.

Connected with the sex instinct also is a craving for admiration and a tendency to self-display. This is seen in the care that the adolescent boy begins to take in his general appearance, the use of hair oil, the peacock-tail turban effect. The line of sublimation where this aspect is strongly manifested is the development of an interest in some good work or service which will bring the one who does it into the limelight and secure for him a measure of admiration and praise. The desire to display the right qualities may be encouraged and opportunities given for the displaying of those qualities. The social service work of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and Red Cross

<sup>1</sup> W. McDougall, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, p. 405.

Societies, with the distinction a uniform gives, can be of great value in this connexion.

On the girls' side maternal feelings are closely connected with the sex instinct. The line of sublimation for those in whom these feelings are strong is in care of the sick, looking after those who are weak, helping those who are backward. In a boarding-house run on 'cottage' lines the cottage gives scope for a great deal of sublimation along this line to the older girls, and, for that matter, to older boys also. The 'big sister' idea may be utilized, where an older girl is put in special charge of a younger one who needs help, and acts as elder sister or mother to her.

In girls submissiveness is another accompaniment of the development of the sex instinct. For those in whom this tendency is strong, sublimation will take the line of service and bearing of others' burdens, of suffering if need be, and in the development of the desire to serve. Such people may naturally fill the role of peacemakers, cultivating the virtue, so hardly come by in most cases, of turning the other cheek.

'Modern psychologists are probably right in tracing a close connexion between our sex instincts and our creative, artistic, and even religious capacities. There is something in man that craves to create, to express; and, even in our semi-pagan semi-civilized western world, there are hundreds of fields of useful and beneficent human activity in which this deep desire in men and women may find release and outlet. There are many unmarried teachers, parsons, nurses, secretaries and others doing splendid work in the world

today, who find in that work a satisfying and compensating scope for the vital powers in them.<sup>1</sup>

In our efforts to help our pupils to control and sublimate the sex instinct, we must beware of the empty mind and the empty life. Of none is it more true than of the adolescent that life should be full of interests. This is not to say that, as is sometimes urged, we ought to seek to tire out boys and girls. Sexual temptation will come with greater force to the tired out boy or girl. But we should seek to arrange their lives so that they are pleasantly busy with either work or play or with some occupation which is creative and of service. In such a programme there must be variety. Often monotony of life causes yielding to temptation. In boarding-schools it is comparatively easy to arrange such programmes of life. But parents in their homes should also do their best to organize the life of their adolescent children. This organization need not be patent to the boy or girl, but it should be none the less carefully done. All the factors that we have discussed should be taken into account. The nature of the child, whether self-assertive or submissive, desirous of leadership or of admiration, should be studied and plans should be laid accordingly.

I do not mean to say that such plans should be hard and fast. They may change according to circumstances. But the parent should have a definite idea of what he is trying to do for his child and should organize accordingly. Hobbies in the home such as gardening, keeping pets, photography (if funds allow), clay modelling, painting, writing both poetry

<sup>1</sup> E. S. Woods, *Everyday Religion*, p. 151.

and prose, dramatics, making collections of things such as stamps—all these can be of use in aiding the parent, and the teacher, to help the adolescent to sublimate the sex instinct. In the home, too, there are numerous opportunities for the expression of the maternal and paternal aspects of the instinct.

Above all the parent must establish that relationship which I have emphasized, which will enable the adolescent child to come to him with his difficulties. This is all-important. In boarding-schools teachers must do their best to take the place of parents, but in the home the establishment of this relationship is the bounden duty of the parent.

'It should be possible for every adolescent to have someone in whom he may confide without reserve, and who will give him sympathetic understanding and constructive help without increasing his fear of his problem. . . . There is no doubt that the most helpful and the most fundamental sex education must be carried on individually in the home by the parents, by way of building up healthy attitudes to sex feelings and interests, and also by giving to children correctly and in an unrestrained, unembarrassed manner the information for which they ask.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. T. B. Mitchell in *The New Era*, February 1933, article entitled 'Sex Instruction for Children'.





## CHAPTER XVI

### THE TEACHING OF THE BIBLE

IN religious education a great deal of our work will be centred round the Bible. It will form the foundation of what we do and is, as it were, our textbook. It is most necessary for us to remember, however, that the teaching of the Bible is simply a means to an end. The Bible is not an end in itself. It is an account of the religious experience of a people and of individuals among that people, and further, an account of how that experience expressed itself in action and interpreted itself in words. The Bible is an account of God's great educational experiment with His chosen people culminating in His revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ.

'Beginning with the fortunes of a single household or tribe, it carries us on to the making of a nation, and finally to the transformation of the whole ancient world. At every point we are reminded that the men and women who passed through this process and by degrees drew more and more of the human race into participation with them, declared that of a certainty they were led into a larger knowledge, constrained to attempt life on higher levels, encouraged and strengthened, in their effort to understand life more clearly and utilize it more creatively, by a wisdom and a

purposive influence exerted as it were from without, yet effective only because it took possession of them from within. . . . And in all this they are conscious that while they are exercising to the full all their powers of initiative they are doing so in response to both appeal and pressure from the Unseen, inscrutable and irresistible, yet always personal. . . . Here surely is the story of a supreme educational enterprise.<sup>1</sup>

The Bible is therefore a guide for us and a means to lead us to an understanding of God and of His aims and methods. It is not an end in itself and it is very necessary to remember this. Knowledge of the Bible, essential though it is to our religion, can never take the place of a first-hand experience of God through Jesus Christ. There is a danger that our religious education is apt to begin and end with the idea of trying to make sure that our children 'know' their Bible, and by knowing it we mean, or at any rate act as if we meant, a purely intellectual knowledge of what is in the Bible, such as we have of a history textbook. This sort of thing is often encouraged by Bible knowledge examinations. Such impositions serve to bring religious education down to the level of much so-called education in ordinary subjects, where examinations cloud the horizon, dull the life, and blast all creative effort. I do not think that Bible knowledge examinations are of the slightest help in leading our pupils to a true knowledge and experience of God. It is this that should be our goal, and not simply a knowledge of who were the kings of Judah, and of how many wives Solomon had.

<sup>1</sup> Basil A. Yeailee, *The Approach to Religious Education*, pp. 96, 97.

I do not mean to say that our children should neglect the gaining of an intellectual knowledge of their Bible. Such a knowledge is essential and they cannot get on without it. But we must remember that such knowledge is not an end, and that it should be gained in such a way that it leads the child, as he grows up, increasingly to experience the power of God and of Jesus Christ in his life. This of course can come only by living out what he learns from the Bible.

This means that in our teaching of the Bible we have to remember that it is necessary to know our children as well as our Bible. The Bible was not written for children, and we cannot just start at the beginning and work through it. We have to know our material and our children, and grade the material according to the children we are teaching. We will certainly find that stories suitable for one child will be most unsuitable for another. I know a small girl who could not bear to hear the story of the Crucifixion. It thoroughly upset her. A boy almost the same age could hear it without any undue emotional strain. In the case of the small girl the story simply had to be left until later.

In the same way the teacher or parent or pastor will know his children, and so will be able to select his material and modify it to suit those whom he is teaching. There is no sense in telling young children horror-filled stories such as we sometimes find in the Old Testament. There is plenty of suitable material without using what is of doubtful value.

Then, too, from this point of view it is, to my mind, always better to start with the Gospels and the life of Jesus. This is the centre of our religion, and this

should be surely and firmly embedded in the thinking and living of the child before we go to other parts of the Bible. Let the child make his acquaintance with Jesus first, so that he will judge all other material in the light of what he has learned about Jesus. This should be firmly established as the norm of judgement and action.

Let the child make his acquaintance with Jesus too as the disciples did, as a human friend. As the perfect human friend is unfolded to their hearts and understanding, they will have no difficulty in advancing further. The approach for the child should never be a doctrinal one. There are, unfortunately, those parents and teachers who try to teach young children doctrines which they themselves understand very imperfectly. The mental and religious result on the children can be imagined. Jesus never made His approach through doctrine; He came to men and women and children as a human friend, and this is the way in which we should introduce our children to Him. The rest will follow just as it did with the disciples. The natural approach is through the personality of Jesus. Let questions of doctrine wait till the child grows older and is in a position to be interested in such things, and able to try to understand them. If we, his teachers and parents, have been able to lead him truly into the fellowship of Jesus, and if our child's religion has been founded on a firm friendship with Jesus, he will have the best possible equipment for facing doctrinal issues and problems.

The Old Testament should not be neglected. Much illustrative material even for the earliest stages

can be got from it and used. Great care in selection must be taken, however, so that nothing that is used from the Old Testament will conflict in any way with what the young child has learned and is learning about Jesus, of His teaching, and of the idea of God that is presented in the New Testament. As we have seen, the teaching and life of Jesus is to be the norm by which all other material is to be judged and selected.

As the child grows up, it will be possible to explain to him the idea of progressive revelation. He will thus be led to understand the development in ideas of God, and in morality, and in religion, of which the Bible gives us an account. In this way the difficulty of reconciling some of the teaching of the Old Testament with that of the New Testament will disappear. Otherwise the child will be troubled with needless doubts and questionings. Towards the end of school life some information on the subject of the formation and authorship and date of the different books, especially of the Old Testament, will also be of great help.

It will be thought platitudinous to say that the teacher or parents must know their Bible, but at the same time it is a requirement which needs emphasizing. By knowing the Bible, I do not mean simply a knowledge of the subject-matter such as may be got from reading the Bible itself and nothing more. That, of course, is necessary. But beyond that it is absolutely necessary for anyone who is attempting to teach the Bible to know something about the background. The historical background, the geographical background, (the Bible cannot be taught without a map) the

customs of the people who figure in the Bible, the political parties and what they stood for, the political and economic conditions of the times, the religious parties and their differences; without some knowledge of all these it is impossible to teach the Bible in any adequate way.

This is true both of the Old Testament and of the New Testament. One cannot understand the actions of Jesus if one does not know the Jewish idea of women, their rules for the observance of the Sabbath, the synagogue system of worship, what the Pharisees and Priests stood for respectively, and so on. One cannot understand the Old Testament without the historical and geographical background. This may seem to put a burden on teachers and parents, but most will find the subjects of absorbing interest and there is no reason why such subjects and knowledge should be considered the preserve of pastors and specialists. There are available nowadays many excellent books from which help can be obtained.

This leads to the question of extra-biblical material. In teaching the Bible, should one stick closely to the subject-matter of the Bible, or should one bring in other material as illustrative and explanatory where possible? If we agree that the Bible is a means to the gaining of religious experience, then we can have no objection to the use of any other material which may also help to build up that experience. The fact that we make the Bible central in our work, and the Gospels central in the Bible, does not preclude the use of extra-biblical material. In many cases, if we are to be able to explain biblical material at all adequately, as has been indicated, we will have to make use of

material gained from other sources. If we find that any particular teaching or trait is happily illustrated by material from outside sources, there can be no possible objection to its use. Especially is this the case when use can be made of material with which the children are familiar through their everyday life or through other parts of their school work. A class had been reading Mary Dobson's poem on Sadhu Sundar Singh, and Martin's poem *Contrast*, and both of these came naturally into the Scripture lesson. Such correlation is all to the good. By a study of biography the religious experience of others can be brought out, and traits, set out in the Bible, can be seen in the lives of men and women. Extra-biblical biography is often the best way of showing Bible teaching in action.

This brings us again to the point that has been emphasized before, namely that our Bible teaching should result in action. There must be a practical application in life of what we learn. The parable of the houses on the rock and on the sand must ever be in our minds, and in the minds of our pupils. We should never allow our Bible teaching to become a purely theoretical thing detached and unrelated. The practical application must always be made, and the teaching put into action.

The method of Bible study will vary with the age of the children concerned. With young children the story method is the most suitable, with older ones the biographical method, but with adolescents the topical method, under which we may include the trait study, is very fruitful. The topical method lends itself to the use of group discussion. These methods with

children and adolescents are much to be preferred to that of simply taking a passage and having an exposition on it, especially if any attempt is to be made to get the children themselves to take part. With smaller children, and with older ones too for that matter, let me emphasize again the following consideration. Never make a child learn by heart anything of the meaning of which he does not have at least an elementary idea. And always make learning by heart voluntary. Only those who have poor verbal memories and have been forced to learn long screeds off by heart know the torture of such a procedure, not to speak of the waste of time and energy.

In schools, some attempt should be made with the older pupils to compare the teachings of the Bible with those of the sacred books of other religions, such as the *Gita*, the *Granth*, the *Koran*. One way in which this can be done, and which has been found successful, is to draw up a syllabus of subjects such as Sin, Salvation, Forgiveness, and so on, and to have lectures given by members of different religions on what their religion teaches on these subjects. Thus in a week a Hindu, a Sikh, a Mohammedan and a Christian can each give a short account of what their religion teaches on the subject for the week. I have found that this plan works very successfully from several points of view. Care must be taken, of course, that the speakers give straightforward constructive statements, and that there is no attacking of other religions, and no debating.

Should Bible teaching be made compulsory in schools? My own experience has been that compulsory religion never did anyone any good, and in a

school with non-Christians, it should never be made compulsory. As a matter of fact, if the subject is even tolerably well dealt with there is rarely any desire to stay away from the Scripture period, and there are tremendous advantages in its being voluntary. I am not thinking of the question of Government grants. The effect on the non-Christian of being compelled to attend Scripture, even though of course he can go away to another school if he likes, is at once to raise a barrier to any impartial interest that he may be liable to take. In the Christian home, Bible teaching should be part of the natural order of things just as meals are, and if the children are brought up to regard Bible teaching and worship as natural, the question of compulsion will not be raised.

The same should be the case in a school for Christians. Of course there are bound to be some who will show a desire to avoid it. I doubt very much whether compulsion will achieve what is aimed at. The result desired can come only through the personal contact of the teacher with the boy or girl, by true sympathy, and by seizing any opportunity that may occur for awakening interest. There is something wrong with the atmosphere of a school where compulsion has to be used.

## CHAPTER XVII

### JESUS THE TEACHER

WE have seen many times during our study that the first duty of a teacher, or parent, or pastor is to try to understand the children with whom he has to deal. The whole trend of modern education is for it to become child-centred and not subject-centred. That is, the teacher pays more attention to the child, his needs, his nature, his development, his desires, his instincts, and his character, than to the subjects that he is to teach the child. The latter are, of course, important, but they come second, and should be determined by the needs, present and future, of the child. So the present-day teacher, if he is a good teacher, is anxious to understand his pupils so that he may help them in the best way and supply them with the opportunities of learning and acting which are most in line with their needs.

This is just as true of religious education as of any other aspect of education. The child must be the centre of our planning, method and practice. It is not enough for us to know that a thing is good. We must know whether it is good for a particular child of the age and stage of development at which the child is. It is necessary for us to know how to lead the child to make that particular thing his own, so that it

is self-won and not accepted from above. In other words, we have to respect the personality of our children.

One of the things that strikes us about the teaching method of Jesus was just this way in which He respected the personality of those with whom He came in contact. He did not use compulsion, nor did He attempt to force His views on people. He had no desire to cow people into submission to His will, nor to intimidate their wills in any way. Those who accepted His way and His teaching, must have done so because they were convinced of its truth, and themselves desired to follow it out.

Even among the small band of disciples there was no rigid adherence to set ways and discipline, no cast iron sets of rules, no 'believe this or get out'. The whole process of education as conducted by Jesus was an attempt to develop the personality of those who were under His influence. This development took place in that atmosphere of freedom which we saw was so necessary for growth.

This was why Jesus rejoiced to find that Peter had found his way to the truth, and this was why Judas Iscariot was not turned out of the band, though Jesus must have known that He was failing with this man. Still no attempt was made to force Judas to conformity, no attempt to marshal public opinion in the little band against him, no attempt to influence him by fear. Either Judas was to be won in freedom by love or not at all.

It was this respect for personality that made Jesus so emphatic on the need for personal experience in religion. It was to a personal experience that He

stroved to lead all who came to Him, and to which it should be our aim to lead our children. His own religion was founded on His personal experience of God, and He knew that this was the only firm foundation. Unless their religion was something surer and firmer than the second-hand article dispensed by the Scribes and Pharisees, it would be of little value to them. 'Sell all thy goods', He says, 'and come, follow me.' 'Come out and test for yourself whether I am the way, the truth and the life.' 'Whom do men say that I am?' He asks. And then, thrusting them back on themselves, 'But whom do *you* say that I am?' He sent the seventy out as lambs among wolves to test out for themselves whether they really had that which would make even the evil spirits subject to them, and rejoiced to find that they had, for the triumph of personal experience meant the overthrow of the power of evil. Nothing can prevail against a religion based on that foundation. So Jesus ever sought to lead others to a first-hand experience of God, and herein lies His greatness as a teacher.

Because this was His aim, He naturally insisted on people's thinking for themselves. Hence He spoke in parables, thus encouraging His hearers to use their intelligence and their spiritual insight. This is one reason why, as a rule, He dealt in principles and not in rules. People want definite guidance laid down that in such and such circumstances they should act in such and such a manner. As a rule, this is just what Jesus avoids doing. He lays down general principles, but the application of those general principles to particular cases is left to us. Apart from the good teaching method, of course, this is the reason of the

unique universality of the message. It is not tied down to one period of time nor to one set of circumstances. We sometimes wish, perhaps, that we had a ready-made set of rules suited for all situations. This is largely because we have grown up under a system of education which leads us to expect to be always spoon-fed. Jesus refused to feed people with a spoon. Men and women had been given intellects to use, and so He tried to train them to use those intellects. Here He has set us, teachers and parents, an example.

Jesus not only respected personality, but He believed in persons. It is very difficult to make much progress with a child unless we believe in him. As we have seen in Chapter IX, we have the power of suggestion working against us if we do not believe in the child. Jesus always saw that this power was on His side. He always tried to suggest good and brave things to those whom He was trying to save. In the same way our message should always be a positive one and not a negative one. Jesus was not afraid to put a high ideal before those who came to Him, and to whom He came. He believed that if you expect great things of people, then they will respond and will do great things. Even when the men and women to whom He came were not at all hopeful cases, He did not hesitate to put a high ideal before them. Matthew was certainly not a hopeful case from the point of view of religion and repentance. But Jesus set a high call before him and he responded. This is the mark of a good teacher, that he believes (and acts according to his belief) that the higher the standard he sets, the better will be the response.

Very often in our work with children, and especially with village children, who have not had advantages, and seem dull, mentally and spiritually, we are tempted to think that they cannot understand the great things of religion and that they cannot respond to a high call. This is a mistake. We do not realize the inspiring effect that faith in those whom we are teaching will have on them. Jesus had faith in men and women. That faith was itself a means of help to the people He was trying to save. So it will be with us. Because of our faith it will be easier for those with whom we are dealing to respond.

Jesus did not like crowds, nor did He like dealing with people in the mass. He much preferred to deal with individuals. 'He was the Guru and His methods were those of the Guru. The West is coming gradually to appreciate again the essential value of guruship, and our educational methods and ideals are showing signs of approximating more to those of the Guru. Every phase of His pupils' lives was under the watchful care of this Guru. His interests were their interests, and their interests were His interests. Each one was guided as was best for him. They were never looked on as a class, and dealt with *en masse*.'<sup>1</sup>

This should be in the forefront of all our thinking on method, and of all our dealings with those in our charge. We must try to forget the class and deal with the individual. I know that it is not an easy thing to do. It takes more time. It takes more nervous energy. It shows up our own weakness and inability to help. It makes very real the meaning of the principle that we have to bear one another's burdens. But it is the

<sup>1</sup> See my *Methods of the Master*, pp. 75-6.

only road to real success in our educational work. In so far as we can deal with individuals and guide the individual, we can make a permanent contribution to the solution of the economic, political, international and religious problems that face men and women to-day. Jesus' method of dealing with these problems was by influencing the individual. If the individual has the right spirit and the right attitude, then solutions will come. Hence the importance of working with the individual. We can accomplish infinitely more by dealing with our children as individuals than we can by thinking of them and treating them as a class.

In dealing with individuals too, we will find ourselves much more likely to be successful if we follow the method of Jesus again, which was the optimistic one of looking for the best in people. No matter how bad a person was, Jesus never gave up hope. He was always looking for something good in the man or woman whom He was trying to help. When Zaccheus came out to see Jesus, no one else in Jericho could see anything good in him. But Jesus saw that at least he was curious. He had curiosity, and curiosity is a good thing. It may not be much, but it is something. So Jesus recognized that there was something good in Zaccheus which no one else had yet seen. Jesus started from the good thing and worked on it, and succeeded in saving the soul of Zaccheus. There is a principle in education which says, 'Proceed from the concrete to the abstract.' In religious education there is a corresponding principle which says, 'Proceed from the little good available to the great good possible.' This was the principle on which Jesus worked. He believed that there was some good in every man and woman

which ought to be found, and, having been found, ought to be used.

A good teacher is always trying to put himself into the place of those whom he is teaching. He tries to understand how they are thinking, and how they are facing life. The best teachers are usually those who can remember how they themselves felt as boys and girls, because that helps them to understand the boys and girls they are teaching. Jesus too, was able to put Himself into the place of those with whom He was working, and was able to look at life through their eyes. He had the gift of the sympathetic imagination. We remember the sympathy He had for the thief who was dying alongside Him; how He made allowances for those who were crucifying Him; how He understood the motives of Mary in bringing the precious ointment when others misunderstood her. In the same way in our work we should try to follow His example and put ourselves in the place of those we are trying to help. We should attempt to realize what their temptations are, and what their difficulties are. If we can do this, then we shall be able to do much more effective work.

Because Jesus had this sympathetic imagination to such a high degree, we find that a characteristic of His teaching was that it was extremely practical. 'He was concerned with living, and His teaching was also concerned with living because it was the result of living. Jesus was concerned with the everyday life of men and women. His teaching was something that was going to help them in that life and make it fuller and happier. He did not go into deep theological arguments nor hide His meaning in philosophical

terms. He was a plain man and spoke in plain terms. In simple stories that a child could understand, He taught the most profound truths. These truths were part and parcel of His daily life, and He taught them in terms of daily life. Thus He brought God very close and made Him very real. He assured men and women that the commonest things of ordinary life were the concern of God, and that He cared for the most trivial events. ‘‘Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? . . . Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?’’ Here God is real and vitally related to everyday life. Jesus always related His theory to practice, as every successful teacher must do.<sup>1</sup>

Another aspect of this practical characteristic of Jesus’ message and method was His insistence on action as a result of teaching. It is very evident that Jesus regarded teaching which did not result in action as wasted energy and time. Again and again He insists that practical expression and action must follow. We see this in the case of the rich young ruler. ‘You claim to be religious,’ said Jesus. ‘Then show your beliefs in action. Sell all that you have and follow me.’ The lawyer wanted to know who his neighbour

<sup>1</sup> *Methods of the Master*, pp. 74-5.

was. He was told and was sent away to follow out what he had learned. Zaccheus heard a great message that afternoon in Jericho. It resulted in unmistakable action. The people on the right-hand side in the parable of the last judgement were not those who knew something, but those who had *done* something. There is no principle that needs to be more emphasized in our religious education than this principle of Jesus that action must follow hearing.

The greatest lesson that as teachers, parents or pastors, we can learn from Jesus, is that it is by our lives that we ultimately teach, guide and help. 'Undoubtedly the most effective way of teaching that Jesus employed was the way in which He lived His message. Those who had seen Him and knew Him had seen God and knew what God was like. Jesus did not ask people to believe anything which He Himself did not act out in His life. If they doubted His teaching, then He could point them to the facts and actions of His life, and these they could not question. They spoke for themselves. His life bore out His teaching without any suggestion of inconsistency. It was this living message that drew men to Him, and showed them the truth. . . . We seem to find comfort in making up the deficiencies in our deeds by our words. With Jesus it was the other way round. He expanded and clarified His words by His deeds. He was never faced by the necessity of having to justify inconsistencies between His words and His deeds. His life was a living commentary on His words. He is the supreme illustration of Phillip Brooks' famous definition of preaching, "the communication of truth through personality". It was by

personal contact that Jesus taught, and it was by His life that He gave concrete examples of the meaning of His teaching. Jesus never had the humbling experience of seeing His teaching ruined because of inconsistency in His life. The importance of this cannot be too often emphasized. If only we realized more vividly the need for this absolute consistency between words and deeds, how much more quickly the Kingdom would spread.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Methods of the Master*, pp. 71-2.

## SOME HELPFUL BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

<i>The Charterhouse Programme of Religious Education</i>	E. L. KING	Oxworth Book Service, Landour
<i>Psychology and Morals</i>	J. A. HADFIELD	Methuen
<i>What Is and What Might be</i>	E. HOLMES	Constable
<i>The Mastery of Sex</i>	L. D. WEATHERHEAD	Student Christian Movement
<i>Vision and Authority</i>	J. OMAN	Hodder & Stoughton
<i>Modern Psychology and Education</i>	STURT AND OAKDEN	Kegan Paul
<i>Religious Education</i>	T. G. SOARES	University of Chicago Press
<i>Introduction to Social Psychology</i>	W. McDougall	Methuen
<i>Character and the Conduct of Life</i>	W. McDougall	Methuen
<i>Youth</i>	O. A. WHEELER	University of London Press
<i>Child Psychology and Religious Education</i>	D. WILSON	Student Christian Movement

<i>The Unfolding Life</i>	A. A. LAMOREAUX	H. R. Allenson
<i>About Ourselves</i>	H. A. OVERSTREET	Jonathan Cape
<i>Influencing Human Behaviour</i>	H. A. OVERSTREET	Jonathan Cape
<i>Psychology and Religious Experience</i>	W. FEARON HALLIDAY	Hodder & Stoughton
<i>Suggestion and Auto-suggestion</i>	C. BAUDOUIN	George Allen & Unwin
<i>Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War</i>	W. TROTTER	Ernest Benn
<i>The Child in the Midst</i>	W. BRYCE	Y. M. C. A. Publishing House, Calcutta
<i>The Approach to Religious Education</i>	B. A. YEAXLEE	Student Christian Movement
<i>The Children We Teach</i>	S. ISAACS	University of London Press





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